



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

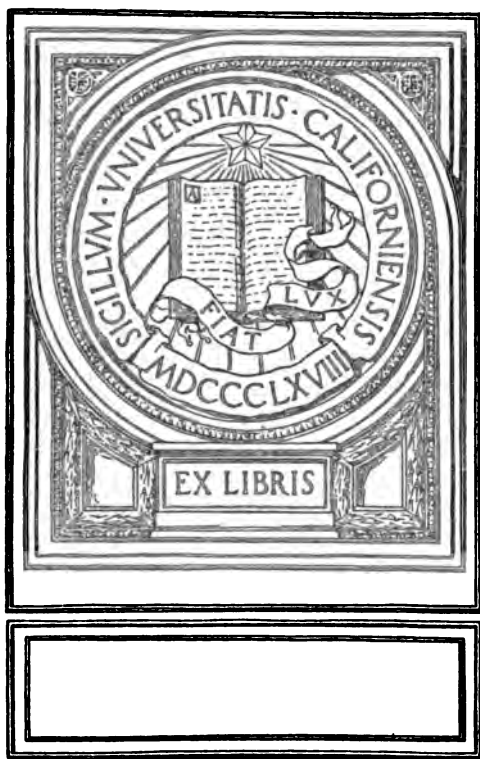
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

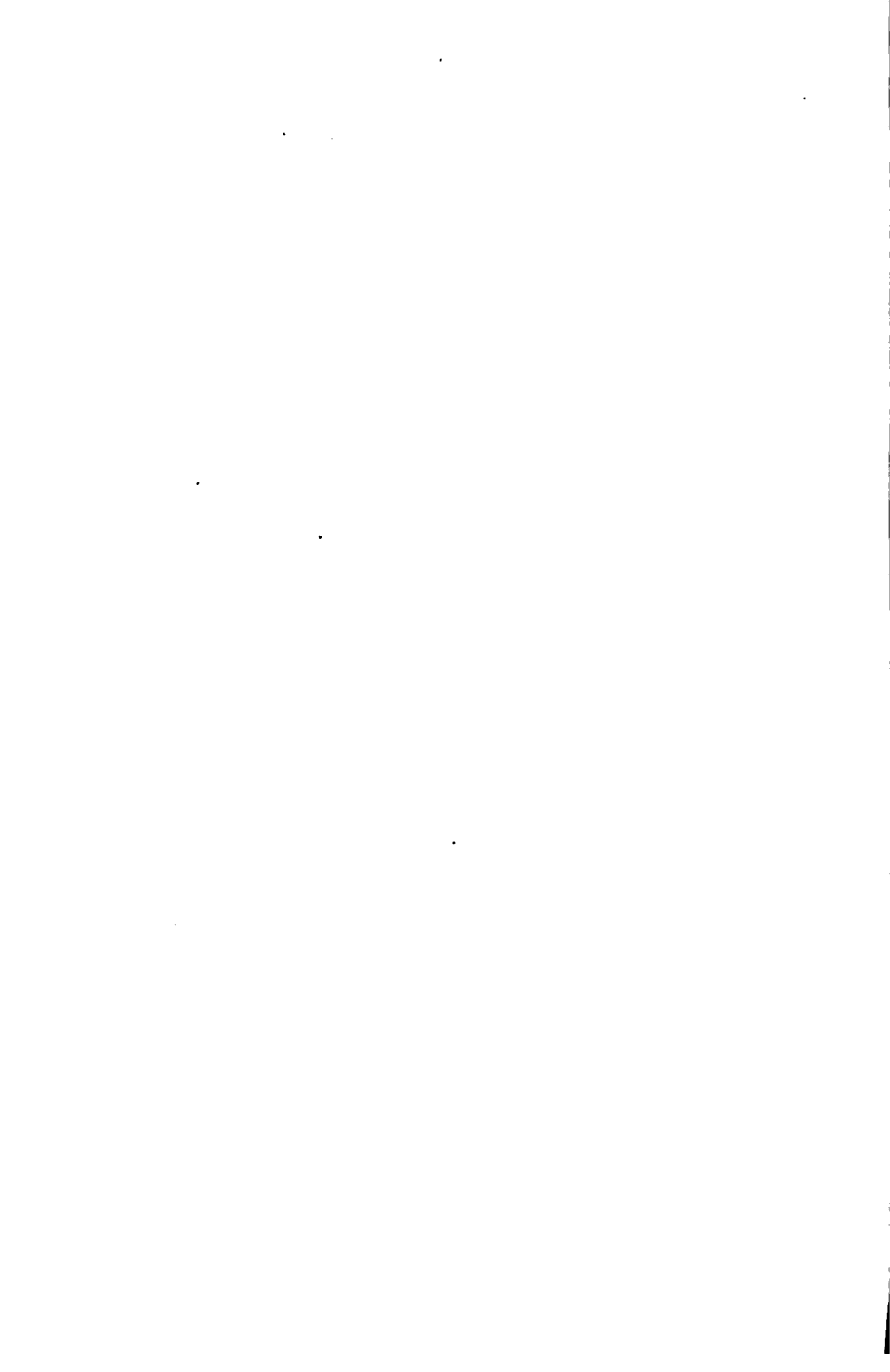
THE BLACK POLICE OF
QUEENS - LAND

E.B.KENNEDY

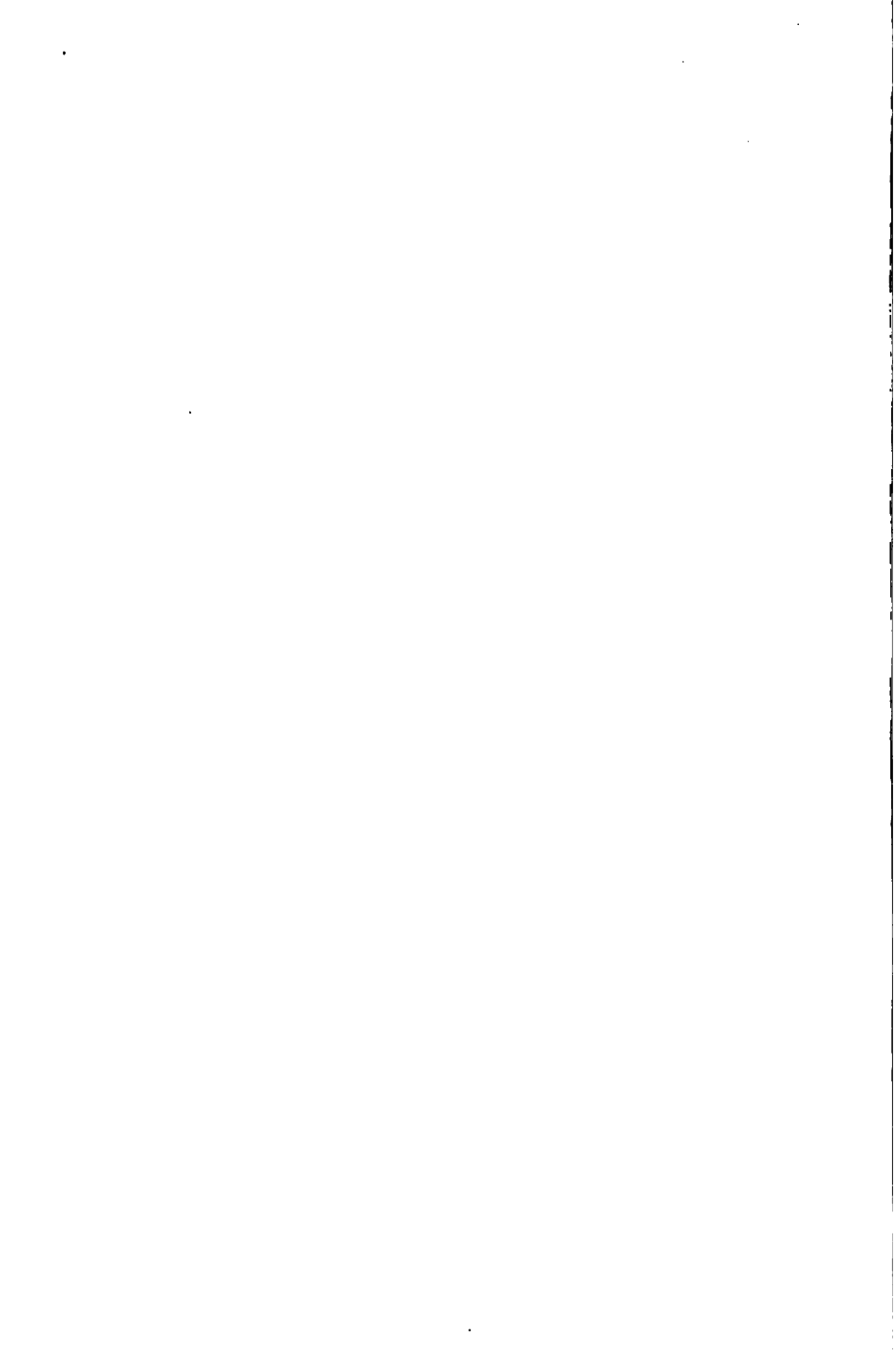


9/12
825 B7
-2621





THE BLACK POLICE OF QUEENSLAND





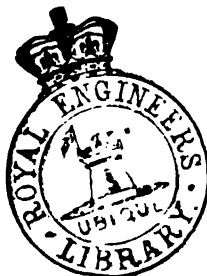
MR. G. MURRAY, SEVEN OF HIS "BOYS," AND TWO JUNIOR OFFICERS (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES).
Frontispiece.]

THE BLACK POLICE OF QUEENSLAND

REMINISCENCES OF OFFICIAL WORK
AND PERSONAL ADVENTURES IN
THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLONY

By EDWARD B. KENNEDY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



B. 73.
C. ———

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1902

DU272
K4

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON, AND VINEY, LD.
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

TO MR
ALFRED

2177

DEDICATED
TO MY SON

P R E F A C E

"Far as the breeze can bear
The billows' foam, survey our Empire."

I VENTURE to think that the following account of some of my early Colonial experiences may interest the British Public, and also my old friends of those days.

The first, because everything connected with our Colonies has excited unusual interest since the opening of the South African War, and Queensland, Great Britain and Ireland's youngest and perhaps most progressive possession, has, together with her sister Colonies, come nobly and grandly to the front at the Call to Arms.

The second, because these reminiscences, slightly to paraphrase an old song, will remind "Old bushmates of days that are past," of "Sunny days"—our later Queensland toast.

The two pen-and-ink drawings speak for themselves, but a pathetic interest is added to them from the fact of their having been executed by the hand of the late Sir Frank Lockwood. During a visit home, connected with business, I mentioned to him, then Mr. Lockwood, that I had got along fairly well with the black "boys." Also that having visited New Zealand for a few days I had been informed that the Maoris were "now quite civilised." The result was that I received the two humorous illustrations bearing the artist's remarks which appear at p. 266.

I am indebted to Messrs. J. Spiller, P. Mennell, and Hubert Garroway for many of the photographs of "The Black Police of Queensland" which have been reproduced to illustrate this book. Those referring to the 'sixties are from originals given me in those days; old pictures which I never thought would reproduce, but in my publishers' hands they have come out as clearly and truthfully as on the day they were first taken.

The photographs of Chillagoe, District of Cairns, I insert to give an idea of what some

portions of a rocky barrier in Queensland are like, for I have never been so far north. Chillagoe lies some thousand miles northwest of Brisbane.

This district is famous for its stalactite caves and waterfalls; one of the latter, named "The Barron," has a fall of seven hundred feet.

Though in two or three cases I have not given the real names of certain individuals, and in one instance have altered the locality of a district, yet the incidents throughout these pages are my own experiences. Where I quote, I mention the fact, as in Chapter XI. As stated, I heard the account from Blake's own lips.

So I launch my story of the Land of the Queen, where I spent some of my earliest and happiest days.

E. B. K.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS IN QUEENSLAND

	PAGE
Early Days in Queensland—Colonial Experience— Somerset Land Sale—"Tickets for Soup"—Visit to a Cattle Station—My Friend the Parson— Tame Blacks—A Sable Orator—A Glance at the Duties of the Queensland Native Police—The Gentleman "Cabby"	1

CHAPTER II

COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

Concerning Social Matters—Industry of the Settlers —Newspapers—Trip to Moreton Bay—Sail North	28
---	----

CHAPTER III

VARIED EXPERIENCES

Fuller Description of the N.M.P.—More Colonial Experience—"Overlanding"—Our "Skippers" —We "Rush"	34
---	----

CHAPTER IV

THE DIGGINGS—GYMPIE CREEK

	PAGE
The Diggings—Gympie Creek—Descriptive of Gold Mines and their Working—"A Roll Up"—John Chinaman—The Surgeon Rushed	41

CHAPTER V

FARTHER NORTH

To Port Denison—Gaffing the Cattle Dealer—Bourner's Hotel—"Camping Out Song"—"The Overlander"—Troublesome Blacks—Bottle Tree	59
--	----

CHAPTER VI

RECREATIONS

The Great Cockle—"Salisbury Plains"—Rough Riders—A Little Fishing—Jimmy Morrill—"Young Bloods"—Northern "River Mob"—"Bottle Chorus"—I am Cast into Prison—The Pattern M.C. and Our Ball—Southern "River Mob"	74
--	----

CHAPTER VII

THREE BLACK FIENDS

A Senior N.M.P. Officer—Sailors in their Struggle for Life	92
--	----

CONTENTS

xiii

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST PATROL

	PAGE
My First Patrol—The Burdekin River—Perching Ducks — Quickly-made Canoe — Wild Horse "Venison"—Arrive on Coast—Site of present Townsville—Short Rations—Shark Fishing—A Spin for Life — The Stalker Stalked — The Leichhardt Tree—Lost Fishing Tackle—Wild Blacks Again	101

CHAPTER IX

TURN SOUTHWARD

Turn About for Port Denison—Murdered Shepherd — Burial in the Bush — The Pursuit — Bad Basaltic Range — View the Blacks' Camp — Assailed with Boomerangs — Fight with the Murderers—Sub-aquatic Telegraphy—The Jins — Love Making and Matrimony—Notes concerning Blackfellows' Customs	113
--	-----

CHAPTER X

SPRING CREEK BARRACKS

On entering the Force—I join Head-quarters— "Timeringle"—The Bush Shanty—Free Drinks —The "King"—Barcoo Rot — Spring Creek Barracks — Duties — My First Round — The Loaded Log—Supplying the Larder—Scenery of the Nogoa—Tracking Blacks—Stockman up a Tree—Loss of his Library—Delicacies — Fever and Ague—"Lucy"—A New Sensation	127
--	-----

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT PIONEER

PAGE

The Wills's Massacre—Blake the Invincible— Westall's Murder—Tracking the Fiends— Nemesis—The Missing Overseer and his Master —Following the Trail—"Nicky Nicky's" Work —Basaltic Barrier—Note on Scouting . . .	146
---	-----

CHAPTER XII

BLAKE THE INVINCIBLE

Negotiating the Rock Barrier—Smoke at Last—A Flank Movement—Cornered—Escape of "Nicky Nicky"—Murderers given up—Final Fate of "Nicky Nicky"—Return to Salvia Downs— Blake's Cattle Raided—Death of the Warrior "Wanny"—The Corroborree—A Deed of "Derring-do"—Blake and the Bushranger— Pioneers of the N.M.P.—"Billy" the Scout in the Present War	159
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII

AN IRISH LASSIE

Return to Spring Creek—Shift Quarters—Guyanda Creek—A Daughter of Erin	174
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV

ANGLING

Mainly consisting of Sport, as Fly fishing—The "Palmer"—Shooting Sharks—Tidal Waters— Crocodile's Nest—"Dugong"—Gentlemen of Colour—Five o'clock Tea—Turtle Hunting . . .	181
--	-----

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER XV

BIRDS AND RABBITS

	PAGE
Pigeons and other Bush Fowl—Giant Fig Tree— Chin Chin—Notes on the Natural History of the District—"Them Blankety Rabbits"—Mid- night Raid on the Bunnies—A Good French Settler	198

CHAPTER XVI

RIDING FEATS

A Bobbery Pack—Wild Pigs—A Dingo Hunt—B— rides a Bullock—Squeejee's Rough Paces— "Rarefied" at Last—B— Wins his Bet	211
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII

"JIM"

"Piled up" in the Fitzroy—Slim Jim—A "Bogie" and a "Bange"—A Nasty Position—Jim Speaks Firmly—The "Battle of the Bogie"—Jim knocks out the Greaser—My Friend the P.M. —Blackfellow Hung—Chin Chin's Narrow Escape	224
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

MONSIEUR

Monsieur Taxy—His Spicy Appearance and Full- flavoured Songs—Botanist and Skin Collector —The Frenchman in Love—Peculiar Notions— An Amorous Quest—The Lost Foreigner—The Dusky Beauty—Adieu to Taxy	234
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX

THE JACKEROO

	PAGE
Thirsty Pat—"Man Bushed"—The Search—Short of Water—Tracking Rewarded—"Blank's" Sandy Bed—Himself Again—Pat's would-be Treatment	249

CHAPTER XX

SOME OLD FRIENDS

End of N.M.P. Experiences—Some Old Colonial Friends—Up-to-date Accounts of Tobacco and Coffee Cultivation from <i>British Australasian</i> of May 1901—References to de Satgé's Book, W. A. Horn's, and Jack Barry's	267
--	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>To face page</i>
MR. G. MURRAY, SEVEN OF HIS "BOYS," AND TWO JUNIOR OFFICERS (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
BRISBANE IN THE 'SIXTIES, SHOWING THE OLD WINDMILL WHICH IS NOW THE OBSERVATORY AND CENTRE OF THE TOWN	2
BRISBANE: LOOKING TOWARDS TOOWONG FROM OBSERVATORY (PRESENT DAY)	4
SANDGATE ROAD, BRISBANE, IN THE 'SIXTIES	14
"CLAD . . . IN SCANTY OLD SKIRTS"	16
BREAKFAST CREEK, BRISBANE, DURING THE 'SIXTIES	24
QUEENSLAND N.M. POLICE AND BARRACKS (PRESENT DAY)	48
QUEENSLAND N.M. POLICE (PRESENT DAY)	64
TOWNSVILLE (PRESENT DAY)	112
CATHEDRAL ROCK, CHILLAGOE, DISTRICT OF CAIRNS, A THOUSAND MILES N.W. OF BRISBANE	118
SPRING CREEK BARRACKS IN THE 'SIXTIES	134
PORTION OF LIMESTONE RANGE, CHILLAGOE	160
SPILLER'S SANCTUARY OF "MAGPIE" GESE, NORTHERN QUEENS- LAND (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES)	182
HOME OF THE "PALMER," NORTHERN QUEENSLAND (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES)	186
BUTTRESS OF GIGANTIC FIG-TREE	200

	<i>To face page</i>
WOOL TEAMS	210
"EDWARD ALSO GOT ON SO WELL WITH THE NATIVES" (From a drawing by Frank Lockwood, Q.C.)	266
"INTERESTING RESULT OF CIVILISATION AMONGST THE MAORIS" (From a drawing by Frank Lockwood, Q.C.)	266
GUNYAHs, DILLY BAGS, AND YAMS (PRESENT DAY)	268
COFFEE PLANTATION, BLACKALL RANGE, QUEENSLAND	270

THE BLACK POLICE OF QUEENSLAND

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS IN QUEENSLAND

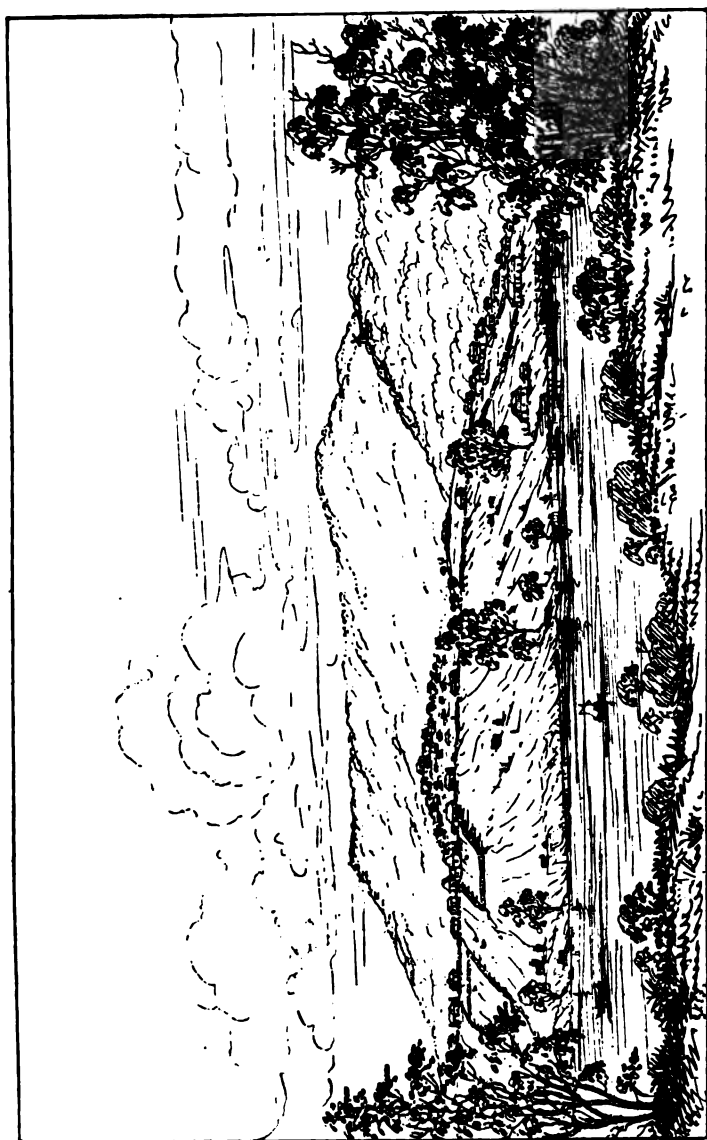
Early Days in Queensland—Colonial Experience—Somerset Land Sale—"Tickets for Soup"—Visit to a Cattle Station—My Friend the Parson—Tame Blacks—A Sable Orator—A Glance at the Duties of the Queensland Native Police—The Gentleman "Cabby"

QUEENSLAND has nobly come forward, together with her sister Colonies, to fight for the old country during the present war; and as I lived there for some years during the period of her earlier history—she separated from New South Wales in 1859, whilst I landed in Moreton Bay in 1864—I feel that I may offer at the present date a few notes concerning the history of the Colony during those early days and further place on record certain incidents and experiences which befell

me, more especially during the time which I served in the more northern parts of the Colony in the Native Mounted Police, or "Black Police," for by this name the force was often known. In these reminiscences I by no means rely entirely upon memory, for I still retain my old Queensland diaries, together with some official papers connected with the force in which I served.

I will describe this force, together with the life I led in it, more fully in subsequent chapters, and though I have some of my old Slater's diaries to fall back upon, yet I can remember without external aid many scenes, incidents, and names of men connected with those days better than I can sometimes call to mind events of last week and people's names of later periods. I take it that the simple reason is that a "new chum," having landed in a new country and not long out of his teens has every incident vividly and lastingly impressed on his memory.

It is obvious that great changes have occurred in this go-ahead Colony since the sixties. Civilisation has made enormous strides, and a vast extent of country, especially the coast line extending right up to the Gulf, is



BRISBANE IN THE 'SIXTIES, SHOWING THE OLD WINDMILL WHICH IS NOW THE OBSERVATORY AND CENTRE OF THE TOWN.
[To face p. 2.

TO YINU AIRBORNE

now under tillage. Most of this was formerly waste land.

During the many years that I have been at home I have so often been questioned as to the area of Queensland, and what the life there is like, that I will endeavour to put into writing answers to these and other questions, which, in all important details, will apply to the present year of Grace.

It is not an idle boast to state that Queensland is one of the largest of the British Colonies, possessing as it does an area of 668,000 square miles—five times the size of the United Kingdom. The Colony comprises the whole north-eastern portion of the Australian Continent. It may also be remarked that some of the settlements in the interior are over 600 miles from the capital, Brisbane. This will, perhaps, give some idea of the extent of country within her limits.

The population on December 31st, 1867, was 100,000, and on December 31st, 1899, 512,604.

When the emigrants first came out under the agency of Mr. Jordan, labour was in great demand—in fact, for a long time the supply was not equal to the demand, so large were

the orders from the country. Some of the emigrants brought money with them, and commenced business in the towns, so that houses and land rents advanced, and buildings were put up ; but the temporary prosperity—for so it could only be called—which existed at the time, was mainly due to the expenditure of borrowed capital in the construction of public works. Many of these public works were certainly of doubtful necessity, but any permanent benefit, with a view to consolidating the Colony, and giving inducement to the people to settle on the lands, was scarcely thought of. Those who attempted farming at that time were ruined—not ruined from natural causes, but because the land laws of that period obliged the farmer to spend all his capital at one fell blow in purchase-money and fencing.

Emigrants still poured in with every ship, but latterly, *i.e.*, during the sixties, and shortly before emigration was stopped, of what class ? Chiefly the refuse and scum of London and the manufacturing towns, who landed on Queensland shores totally devoid both of capital and character. I think I saw the biggest lot of roughs landed in a port north of Brisbane that I had ever seen in my life trooping out of a

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



BRISBANE : LOOKING TOWARDS TOOWONG FROM OBSERVATORY (PRESENT DAY).

[To face p. 4-

TO THE
AIRBORNE

ship. They were no sooner ashore than they formed rings in the one street of the township and stripped to fight; whilst in the bars of the settlement they relieved the inhabitants of their watches and money, merely to show their proficiency, however, and "how it was done," for they immediately returned the spoil to their owners. One man told me it was a very interesting experiment, but "paltry easy, 'cos, you see, 'taint pocket-pickin'; you carries your paper money and watches on your belts."

About the time that influences such as these were in themselves injuring the Colony, the Government supplies were suddenly stopped by the failure of the Agra and Masterman's banks, followed by the suspension of the Bank of Queensland, which caused the failure of numbers in both town and country, not only crippling the Government, but causing thousands to lose appointments, and suddenly stopping almost all the salaries. A reckless system had been going on of working on credit, and, of course, all this was sufficient and more than sufficient to bring on the serious consequences which ensued, and in Brisbane there was even an attempt at a bread riot. It was

the old story of a new country, and when the smash came, the Colony found itself with a numerous unemployed and destitute population, a variety of expensive public works unfinished, an empty exchequer, and a heavy debt.

However, the tide turned at last, no matter how sluggishly, and a slight change for the better took place. The check had the effect of inducing many persons to reduce their indebtedness before undertaking fresh liabilities, and thus producing a sounder and more healthy state of trade.

The facilities which the insolvency laws afforded for applying the "white-washing" process in an easy manner encouraged the growth of a class of "mushroom traders," without capital. This evil cured itself, and people found that it was not always safe to run into debt without being able to pay.

Some progress, too, was made in farming, and it was soon proved, by repeated experiments of the most conclusive nature, that Queensland could grow sugar as well and better than the West India Islands, wheat as well as Chili or California, and cotton as well as the southern States of America. Thus it was very evident that the best way to secure

the future prosperity of the country was to apply the lands of the Colony to agricultural purposes, and by a liberal land law to induce the people to settle on these lands; thus giving a start to a settled population who, by growing sugar and cotton, wheat, and ordinary farm produce, would save many thousands of pounds sent annually out of the Colony for these articles.

This conviction being energetically advanced by the Press led to the Government passing an Act, which has been superseded by better ones since. This first Act, however, was the first real movement towards redeeming the land in the settled districts from the squatter, and applying it to more profitable purposes; also many miles in the district, some of them set apart for railways, were proclaimed as open for free selection for agricultural purposes.

I think it is hardly necessary to follow up the growth of this grand Colony. Suffice it to say, what every one should be aware of, that Queensland has made giant strides since those days of struggle, and now bids fair, from being the youngest of the Australian Colonies, and so favoured by nature, to take

a strong lead, especially in the direction of tropical productions.¹

To resume. It was during the sixties that a great rush was made by both large and small capitalists to buy Government land. These allotments were situated in towns and their suburbs, also on the coast and inland districts, often where there was no sign of a settlement, but where the Government surveyors had been at work, and the land subsequently advertised for sale. Sometimes

¹ I expressed my decided views, shared by all sugar-growers of tropical Queensland, against the present labour policy of the Commonwealth with regard to that crop in the following letter, published in the *British Australasian* of October 31st, 1901:

KANAKA LABOUR IN QUEENSLAND.

EXPERIENCES OF A SUGAR PIONEER.

"SIR,—I have followed with interest certain statements in the daily papers connected with the struggle which is now going on in Australia between those on the one hand who wish to retain their sugar plantations as a going concern by means of the coloured labour which they have always employed, on the other by individuals who know but little of the practical working and inner life of the cane fields.

"How many of these, whose object, if carried out, would spell ruin to the Queensland sugar industry, have ever tried their hands at 'trashing' cane themselves in the northern parts of that Colony?

"I mention that portion because I was there myself for some years during the sixties, and into the seventies, and growing sugar. But better than my own small experience, I prefer to

after selling the land, the Government would desert the site of the settlements which they had put up to auction. I give a case to exemplify this. On April 4th, 1865, the first sale of Crown lands for the new settlement of Somerset took place at Brisbane. Somerset lies on the eastern side of Cape York, the most northern point of Australia, about eleven degrees south of the equator. The lots offered, seventy in number, were all town lots and were bought up with great eagerness at a

quote remarks exchanged between myself and one of the greatest and most successful pioneers of sugar in Northern Queensland, Mr. John Spiller, whose plantations were only divided by a river from that of mine and my partner's, and with whom I have been staying lately in England. We had seen it proved that planting and hoeing cane was deadly enough work for the white man, but trashing!—this proved the 'dead finish.'

"It is, of course, an old story for planters, but let the 'New Chum' endeavour to picture the following description: A dense jungle of Bourbon or other canes. Overhead, anything from 120 up in the sun. Inside, a furnace of shade, with not a breath of air; but worse to follow, for every leaf that one tears away or 'trashes' liberates a host of invisible spikelets of some description, which fasten upon the skin and set up a horrible irritation.

"This subtle dart pierces even the clothing which is worn in those latitudes, but it touches not the velvety epidermis of the naked Kanaka, who laughs at such work, and is as much in his element in this suffocating prickly thicket as he would be were he sporting instead in the river near by."

"One case in point will suffice, and can be proved up to

very great advance on the upset price, which was fixed at £20 per acre. It averaged £149 per acre!

Such was the excitement in connection with this sale that two old squatters of my acquaintance came hurrying out from England to be in time for the bidding, for was not Somerset to be the coaling depôt and chief place of call for the Torres Straits line of steamers, and to be a free-trade port into the bargain?

the hilt, were proof required. Some forty white men, diggers out of work, came to the plantation of my friend and asked for a job at anything. The place was full up with hands, and they were told so, but were also informed that they might as extra men try 'trashing' if so inclined. They jumped at the chance. 'What! Pulling off leaves and good pay for it!' But in a few days out they came and begged for any other job in the world? They then exposed their arms, chests, and backs, and wished further to exhibit their legs. Their whole bodies were in a state of inflamed eruption.

"There is no exaggeration in these statements, and let any one deny them who can.

"No. 'Australia for the white man' is a good and sound enough motto, generally speaking, but let an exception be made on plantations, which, by the employment of coloured labour chiefly, can thus only be made to pay at all. I say chiefly, because, after all, is not one white man required for every three black? Do not by a mistaken policy ruin the sugar pioneers of the grand Colony of Queensland. Spoil not your ship for want of a penn'orth of dark paint!

"Yours, etc.,

"E. B. KENNEDY."

And the result? Shortly after the sale, and before anything further was done, the Government shifted the port of call to Thursday Island and entirely dropped Somerset, owing to the fact, so we were told, that the harbour of the latter place was unsuitable for ships, which fact, one might think, could have been discovered before the sale. I have the names of all the purchasers, seventy in number, self included, and should be very glad to know whether any one holding title deeds of this Somerset Crown land sale could afford any information in the matter. It was indirectly owing to this rush for land which caused me to sail from England at the time I did, for one of the squatters before mentioned, whom I knew, suggested we should travel by the same ship. So we came out in one of the grand old full-rigged clipper ships of that period, making the run from London to Moreton Bay in eighty-four days.

I cannot say that my first experiences on arriving in Brisbane were encouraging. I had brought out the usual "tickets for soup," better known at home as letters of introduction. The first one which I made use of introduced me to a pecuniary loss—a debt

which I have long since "written off." My idea of what constitutes a gentleman is thus summed up—a man who acts fairly to his fellow creatures—who, in fine, "plays the game." No matter of what his birth or parentage consists, that man is a gentleman. But the "new chum" in any Colony often finds that his old country opinion is quite an old-fashioned and erroneous classification. For all that, when he has once been bitten at an early age, provided that the wound is not deep, it will do him good and make him more careful all the rest of his life.

My case can be stated very shortly. Armed with my letter, I was received most kindly and graciously by him to whom it was addressed—a man of good old English birth. One evening at dessert he turned to me with a benevolent smile.

"A splendid chance is just open for a young man like you to advance me a few hundreds, for which I pay you a good interest, and, besides, give you a mortgage over the whole of my vineyards."

Here was indeed a good opening. I rose to it! Jumped at it! Signed and sealed the matter then and there, and the next day

strolled in to a solicitor of the town, with the intention of leaving the rest of the business in his hands.

“Well, you are a young soft! Why in thunder didn’t you come to me *before* you ‘parted’?” he stormed out, when he heard my story. “You have not got the first mortgage, I know for certain, and I doubt if you’ve even the second.”

So it proved. I received some small interest paid irregularly; at length this ceased, and I stand a loser to the end of time for the greater part of my first investment. So I put away the rest of my “tickets,” and determined to go up country at the first opportunity. As luck would have it, I made the acquaintance of a genial squatter at the Queensland Club, who asked me to stay a few days on his station, which was situated some miles from Ipswich. Together we proceeded, doing the first part of the journey by steamer up the “Brisbane,” or, rather, the “Brenner” River, as it is called above the capital, and the latter part on horseback.

This was my first experience on a cattle station, and I spent a most enjoyable time in the society of my host and his family in their

beautiful broad-verandahed house, covered as it was with gorgeous creepers ; the gardens teeming with fruit and vines. Kangaroos, which every new hand wishes to shoot, were plentiful, and I killed two fine ones the first day I went out with a sort of revolver rifle which was lent me ; but I found out that, though my friends were glad enough that I should kill plenty, yet they did not want any portion of these marsupials, not even the tails, so I shot no more. I remember that the old squatter was extremely pleased that I always cleaned his rifle, for he said that his experience was that " new chums " never took any care of his weapons.

Returning to Brisbane, I became associated with a young parson, who had had some experience amongst the blacks of Victoria, but knew nothing of the Queensland aborigines. So as I wished to see " blacks at home," having so far only met with a specimen or so on a station, or the ever-present town loafer begging for " baccy," we decided to ride off together and find a camp of the natives, who, we were informed, were peaceably disposed and partly civilised, in the neighbourhood. Starting early one morning down the Sandgate

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



SANDGATE ROAD, BRISBANE, IN THE 'SIXTIES.

[To face p. 14.

TO VINH ABSOLUTAO

Road, on two sorry jades, which we hired from some livery stables, we reached the encampment by mid-day, following the course of a river according to the instructions given us.

My companion was an individual who combined the qualities of modesty with manliness, a pleasing combination in any country. He informed me during the ride that he had only lately arrived in Queensland, but that he hoped to remain some time, and that his object was to go amongst the blacks of the Colony, and, by first learning what he could of the language, endeavour to gain their confidence and try to do them good in various ways, in which also a little knowledge of medicine that he possessed would prove helpful. Since writing this, I hear that that grand missionary, the Reverend Chalmers of New Guinea, has been killed in a tribal war in that island; a man who was beloved by all who knew him, by every one who had read the incidents of his life, and the reason I mention him here is because my companion, in our quest of the black fellows' camp, stated that he was going to take Chalmers as an example of how to approach aborigines at the outset; thus, not to commence by preaching or tuition, though

a modicum of this might follow when confidence had been established and the language mastered. In fine, that the system which had been pursued in the part of Victoria with which he was acquainted had only ended by the black fellows learning everything that was taught them like so many parrots, with the result that no lasting good was effected, so he intended trying another plan.

When we arrived at the camp we received appalling proof that some of these statements applied as much to the Queensland as to the Victorian black.

Men and women, clad for the most part in scanty old skirts, came running out to meet us, and it was at once evident that the appearance of my mate in his clerical attire had caused great excitement. A black fellow's eyes are everywhere, and he takes in everything at a glance. The natives guessed rightly that I was a new arrival in the Colony, and as my companion had approached the camp by another route to mine, they probably thought that we were unacquainted with each other. At all events, a black fellow came up to me, as I happened to be the first up, and placing his hand gently on the bridle of my horse, nodded



"CLAD . . . IN SCANTY OLD SKIRTS."

[To face p. 16.]

TO VIEW ALPHOTUS

his head in the direction of my friend, with "That fellow priest?" I agreed; upon which, sinking his voice to a mysterious and hoarse whisper, he proceeded—"Budgery. That fellow like it put on shirt over trousel, get a top o' waddy, and yabber 'bout debil, debil;" which, rendered in plain English, reads—"Good. That man puts his shirt on over his trousers, gets top of wood, or pulpit, and talks about devil, devil."

Before I could make any remark upon this new and startling manner of describing a preacher, the whole mob of blacks, who had been listening to the information vouchsafed me, commenced to dance about with joy at having a parson in their midst; and we soon found out the reason, for my instructor, signing to the others to be quiet, struck an attitude, then turned to his reverence with an air of pride and satisfaction, and thus addressed him: "You give mine tixpence mine say lorsprer tin commands budgery quick all same white fellow," which meant "Give me sixpence, I'll say the Lord's prayer and ten commandments splendidly quick as a white man does in church." Then, without a moment's hesitation, he rattled off like lightning, as far as we could

follow him, a page or so of the Church Service, throwing in a few responses here and there. The parson looked grave, as the black, the very second he had concluded, held out his hand for sixpence, and, upon the coin being refused him, evidently considered that he had not spoken his piece fast enough, for he called up another member of his tribe, saying as he pushed him forward, "This fellow *cabon* quick one shillin'." "This man *very* quick, one shilling."

The last-comer was throwing himself into an attitude and filling his lungs preparatory to a violent effort, when I gave them sixpence each to "move on." This, however, was taken without any show of thanks, and they observed that they always had more for repeating their lessons. Then, seeing that we were obdurate, the first orator approached close to my companion, a happy thought having evidently struck him, and putting on a dignified expression said, "See mine yabber along big fellow hat?"

The fact was that in those days the custom was still prevalent amongst certain of the older members of a congregation, upon entering a church, to put up their tall hats and say a little

prayer into them. The blacks had witnessed this ceremony, and, I believe, were honestly endeavouring to please the member of the Church present by showing him that they were well acquainted with his doctrine.

An old and battered tall hat had been produced, for the blacks often sported this article of attire when entering the towns, but we told them to drop it, and ended by examining the weapons and possum skins with which the camp was strewed, eventually buying a few curios for which we doubtless paid an abnormal price, but there was not much of interest in the collection. The parson was sad as we rode homewards; he said that this mockery of religion was evidently kept up by low white men who wished to make sport of these wretched black fellows. And subsequent experience proved to me that these half-tamed, loafing blacks were of little account, being lazy and given to begging for money, which goes at once in drink, though it is against the laws to supply them with liquor.

When we parted he told me that there was evidently no field for him amongst the specimen natives around the towns, but that he should go amongst the wild blacks. He was

a good man, but if there had been a hundred as earnest as he was, little or no good would have come of their efforts, as subsequent experience amongst the aborigines proved to me.

I saw something of blacks on the stations later on. These men were not contaminated by the vices of a town and proved useful enough in a way, but they could not be depended upon for regular work. Admirable as they were for tracking lost cattle or strayed horses, and for shepherding, being well fed and cared for at the same time, yet they had a way of suddenly disappearing when most wanted, sometimes for good, at others for weeks at a time. There were exceptions to this, and they have been known to stay by their masters and remain faithful for years ; but as a rule they are restless, and often have proved treacherous by bringing up members of their tribe to the station, when at a given signal they have suddenly fallen upon the white men, and in this way murdered whole families. The Native Mounted Police are then quickly on the spot, follow up the miscreants by the trail they leave behind them, and punish them according to their deserts. These police consist of a force which is spread

in small detachments over the out-lying districts.

There are some six or more black troopers, or "boys" as they are called, in each detachment, with a white officer in command.

Barracks of a rough but comfortable nature are placed in certain centres a long way from each other, and the duties of the force consist in patrolling stations within their districts and ascertaining whether the owners of these have any complaints to make in connection with the aborigines; also to seek for any one who may be lost in the bush—in fact, to protect the settlers generally. All the "boys" are picked trackers, they are well horsed, and are supplied with uniform. These uniforms are discarded when on the war path, then their costume consists of a brown skin and a belt. As weapon, they each carry a carbine.

I came across one of these small contingents on one occasion at an out-station, and accompanied them on their patrol for a few days, and though no incident worthy of record occurred on this occasion, I found the free and roving life so fascinating that I determined then and there that I would some day enlist as a member of the force. Later on in my

Colonial career I found my hopes realised, and the later pages of this journal are almost entirely devoted to my experiences whilst serving in the Native Mounted Police of Queensland. So I will say no more on the subject now.

We have all heard of the man who landed on a distant shore with the proverbial half-a-crown in his pocket ; I found him, though not in such a state of impecuniosity as he described his condition to be when he first touched the shore of Queensland. Curiously enough, it proved that I knew all about his early career by report. My acquaintance with him happened in this way. There were a few hansom cabs in Brisbane when I arrived there ; and one day I was lounging on the verandah of one of the hotels, " The Queens," I think it was called, when a very spruce cab was driven up and the—cabby I was going to say—but rather the officer who drove it jumped down, took out the well-fed horse that was in the shafts, led it into a shed near by, rubbed it down, washed, dried and fed it, then tied it up under the shade of a tree and proceeded to keep the flies off it with a whisk which he produced from the cab.

These proceedings, coupled with the appearance of the driver, were so unlike anything I had seen in Piccadilly that I determined to go for a drive. As for hailing such a Jehu so gross a proceeding never entered my mind. On closer inspection I saw that he was a good-looking man of about thirty, though the lines on his face betokened some years of a hard life in a hot country. With the exception of a well-kept moustache, he was clean shaved and dressed in an immaculate suit of white duck. I should have put him down as a retired military man, but it proved that he had belonged to the sister service.

"How much to Breakfast Creek?" I asked, as I patted his horse.

"Oh, anything you like," he answered with a pleasant smile. "I see you like the mare, and 'Kitty' wants to stretch her legs. I'll put to and then you jump in."

I did, and the mare, at the sound of her master's voice, fairly flew into her collar and raced down that Breakfast Creek road in a manner that set me thinking, for it was my first, and what proved to be my sharpest, experience of a hansom cab at the Antipodes. I sat tight and smoked, as we bounded over

ruts and roots of gum trees, for the roads were too new in the sixties to be entirely level. The mare never broke her trot the whole distance. At length, when one of the wheels was in a straight line with a huge stump, I was thinking of making a suggestion in a loud voice, for we were creating a great wind, when the trap was flung open and a beaming face appeared as the driver roared out "stand by." I had just time to see that the off wheel had cleared the stump by about half an inch, when I was thrown partly off my seat as the mare was brought up suddenly on her haunches, to a full stop at the gate of the little hotel.

True to my home instincts, I asked, "What is the fare?"

"Oh, damn the expense," was all the answer I received; and then jumping off his perch, he resumed, "I'll just see to old Kitty, and then I'm going to shout," which means, to those unacquainted with Colonial slang, "I'm going to stand drinks."

So I stepped into the bar and was presently joined by my driver, who, after calling for refreshments, said:

"You see, I love that mare, she's all in the

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



BREAKFAST CREEK, BRISBANE, DURING THE 'SIXTIES.

[To face p. 24.

TO MINE AEROTILLAGE

world to me. I don't often send her along that pace ; she wanted to go, so I let her rip. I only carry that whip for show. What did you come out for ? I see you're a new hand ; you're right to be under the old flag."

However, he did not wait for an answer to his question. It was evident that he wished rather to speak of himself, for he continued :

" My name is Payne—Jack Payne—I was a junior officer aboard one of H.M. ships at the siege of Sebastopol. Then I left the service, and after a lot of ups and downs, worked my passage out here and came ashore at Moreton Bay, with two shillings and some pence in my pocket, all in coppers—what I had cleared, in fact, the night before landing, at nap. Then I sawed wood at a Brisbane boarding-house for a week, and so got free rations. After this I helped a 'bullock puncher'—an gllice bullock driver—with his team far up into the back blocks ; landed at a fine station, and there broke in horses for a couple of years or so. Ah ! He was a grand old boss I had there. I turned out some fine 'buggy cattle'—horses to draw buggies—for him too, and when I left he gave me one of them, Kitty outside there, as a present. Yes, I made some dollars at

that place," he concluded, with a sigh, as he drained his glass.

"A pity that you did not stop on," I suggested.

"So it was," he agreed, as he eyed me keenly. "Fact was some of the young hands there were a bit jealous; they thought a lot of my riding though." Then, after a pause, he went on, "I don't mind telling you, it's thundering hot, thirsty work breaking in horses, and perhaps I lifted my elbow once too often, but I was always 'right' when I had a horse in hand. Ah! It was a cruel blow to the whole station when I told them I must go. Then I turned cabby down here, and mean to stick to it as long as I can make enough money to keep Kitty and myself."

Meantime I had been racking my brains as to where I had heard my companion's name before, and now it suddenly all came back to me, so first giving him my own name, I told him that I had seen his in a private journal, coupled with the phrase, "I never heard of him again," and that he had served in the same man-of-war as my brother.

"Done with you, old man, so I did," he shouted, as he jumped off the bar counter,

where he had perched himself the better to watch his mare through the window. "Shake hands—have another—now for a good old yarn."

But we did not stay long, as I had to get back to the hotel, to which he drove me leisurely, as I had begged him to. He had no false pride about him, but would not accept a brass farthing for his services on this occasion. However, it was made up to him afterwards, for a friend and myself subsequently took him and his cab on several trips into the bush. These were over execrable roads where he had chiefly to walk his Kitty, at a note (£1) a day. We went for the purpose of collecting birds, specially seeking the "Rifle" bird of Paradise. These picnics were most enjoyable under the guidance of such a good-hearted fellow as he proved himself, especially in the care and affection he bestowed on his horse. Finally, I may repeat the wording of the old journal, that after I left Brisbane,

"I never heard of him again."

CHAPTER II

COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

Concerning Social Matters—Industry of the Settlers—Newspapers—Trip to Moreton Bay—Sail North

So far I had made no serious attempt with regard to cutting out a line for myself in the Colony. Perhaps my first experiences had exercised a certain amount of prudence in the matter, and I argued to myself that if a man loafs for a period amongst the right sort of folk, he picks up many hints which are sure to be of service to him in the days that follow. I found that every one was most hospitable and kind, and that without introductions being presented to them—probably *because* of that fact.

I enjoyed most pleasant times at Government House, the then Governor being the late Sir George Bowen. Amongst others, I met here many of the squatters and wool kings of the Colony, men who showed hospitality of the free and hearty nature which specially

obtains in Australia ; and, later on, under Governor Blackall's régime, friends and myself had the privilege of accompanying him in his "specials" up country ; also of exploring Moreton Bay and the numerous creeks in the *Kate* steamer.

As a set out, "Colonial experience" was thus rendered both easy and fascinating. Besides this, during spare hours I used to pay visits to the poorer class of settlers around the town, and to the richer farms of fruit and vegetables in the neighbourhood. The industry of the smaller settlers, at the time of which I write, consisted chiefly in growing fruits of the earth for the local markets. Their log houses were rough, and roofed with bark or zinc, as were, in fact, most of the houses of Brisbane and other towns ; but their soil was virgin soil. Many a settler, both in southern and tropical Queensland, owed much to Mr. Hill, who was then curator of the Brisbane Botanical Gardens and also to the Acclimatization Society, for his success in cultivation, owing to the advice he received, and the consignments of suitable plants and trees which were sent him from these institutions.

One of the best sources of information,

especially to a new-comer, consists in his studying the local newspapers ; and a letter which I read in the *Brisbane Courier* sent me off to an old-established fruit farm at Boggo Road, near Brisbane, where I saw fruit grown by the acre. The letter read as follows :

Pines. " I send you the result of my twenty years' experience of the uses and value of this delicious fruit. First—Pine-apples can be preserved at a cost of 5s. per dozen for exportation to any part of the world. Second—The juice from one dozen of pine-apples will make three bottles of rich, pure wine, worth 1s. 6d. per bottle. The fruit, after taking away the juice will make six pounds of jam preserve, and the peels alone will yield three bottles of cider Third—Sixty pounds of pine-apples (about three dozen), at a cost of 5s., will yield one gallon of alcohol, worth (at least) 17s., giving a net profit of 4s. per dozen. Brandy manufactured from the pine-apple is far superior in flavour to brandy made from the grape ; but the common still now in use is unsuited to the successful conversion of the pine-apples into alcohol, as there exists a deleterious acid in the pine-apple which the common still cannot extract."

The writer of this letter evidently possessed the secret of extracting, for the best proof, that of taste, assured me that his brandy was a nutty liqueur of delicious flavour. His idea, he told me, was to form a company.

Excellent pines were selling at the time of which I write at 3*d.* a dozen.

The *Queenslander* was a weekly newspaper which I took in during my residence in the Colony. It was established in 1866. I used sometimes to have my little "say" in it, and lately the editor published a letter from me, concerning the "Palmer." This is a tropical fish, and as there was a discussion in a *Queenslander* of 1901 as to the origin of the name, I settled the matter by sending a letter to the editor giving my reason for so naming the fish, and stating that I had the honour of being the first to effect his capture with rod and salmon fly, which letter he printed.

Amongst other excursions I went with a ship-mate of mine to Moreton Bay on a camping-out expedition. My last experience of living under canvas had been whilst shooting around the Paarl—Cape of Good Hope—in 1863. But each Colony has its own little, or rather important, way in connection with tent life, so

that on this occasion I gladly availed myself of the services of one "Pablo," a Malay fisherman who knew every yard of the bay. We started in a rowing boat from the Brisbane wharf, and dropped down the river during one of those bright July days that occur during the unrivalled winter of Queensland; we rowed until the mouth of the river was reached, then up sail and steered for King Island. Here we made a large fire and rigged our tent under the lee of a scrub, close to high-water mark. The night was bitterly cold.

The next day we made Dunwich. This is an establishment kept up by the Government for old shepherds and other people who can no longer help themselves. From there we eventually made our point, and a long sail it was, to "Flat" rock in the southern channel. Here we had excellent sport with hooks and lines, for in three hours we pulled up some two hundred large schnappers, also two groper—one of these latter weighed forty pounds. Whilst camped in another part of the bay we received a visit from the chief warders of the convict island of St. Helena; they had made us out with their glasses and brought a most acceptable present of butter, eggs, and

milk, from the superintendent Mr. McDonnell, who keeps the convicts employed cultivating cane and making sugar. Before we left the bay to return home we paid a visit to H.M.S. *Blanche*, which was anchored there, by the invitation of her captain, and spent a most pleasant time, as one always does on board a man-of-war.

So far chiefly amusement, and it occurred to me that it was high time to ask oneself the question—"Why come eighteen thousand miles and more, simply to gad about and amuse oneself?" The question was answered by my mate after we had returned to Brisbane. "Let us go north," he said, "and look about." No sooner said than done. We were both free agents, and packing, which requires much forethought and brain work at home, did not trouble us a little bit. It consisted of throwing sundry "slops," as ready-made clothing was called, into a couple of leather bags, when we took the first steamer bound for the northern ports, my first advance towards entering the Native Police, though 'twixt this and then I experienced a bit more Colonial experience. I will first repeat more fully the "why and the wherefore" of the corps of "Black Police."

CHAPTER III

VARIED EXPERIENCES

**Fuller Description of the N.M.P.—More Colonial Experience—
“Overlanding”—Our “Skippers”—We “Rush”**

“AUSTRALIA has been won by a hundred years of bloodshed.” So I have heard more than one old squatter aver, and there is truth in the statement. The aborigines in all countries naturally fight for their rights, so in Australia they treated the first white men as enemies, and began by murdering inoffensive shepherds. We Britons, with good reason, determined to develop and populate this magnificent island continent, and as time went on we organised a force of Native Mounted Police in the new Colony of Queensland, for the purpose of protecting outside settlers from the raids of the blacks. These troopers were drawn from various tribes which inhabited the more settled districts. They were commanded by white officers, and distributed in small squads in various outlying parts of the country. The

barracks for the officers were built of logs and roofed with bark. The troopers, or "boys," as I shall continue to call them, had "gunyahs," or huts, of their own outside the main building. These gunyahs were practically sheds of bark open to the air all round, for a native catches cold, or even consumption, if he has to sleep in tents or under the white man's roof.

As I served in the force during a portion of the early sixties, I will endeavour to describe as accurately as possible the sort of life we led, and the duties we had to perform. I have nothing so thrilling to communicate as fights with bushrangers; for those lively gentry confined their attentions to the older and richer parts of the Colonies; but of adventure and incident I had my fair share, and will here set down my experiences. At the same time it will be obvious to any Queenslander of those days that some episodes connected with the doings of the force cannot be published. Events happened which were unavoidable, and the "boys" got beyond control in certain circumstances. There was a special instance of this when an officer of theirs was speared to death. This event happened not many miles from our own camp, soon after I joined.

By the way, this poor fellow met his death owing to his own want of judgment and experience, for he had formed his camp on the edge of a dense scrub, the most dangerous of all situations. Had he, for want of a better place, pitched his tent inside the thicket, it would have been safer, as spears and other wooden weapons cannot be wielded to any advantage in such a place. The blacks rushed the camp at daylight—the “boys” were asleep as usual, and their officer was speared in his tent.

It must be borne in mind by those who are not “in the know” that these half-civilised natives, now turned into troopers, were enlisted from different tribes, and for that reason the white man who commanded them was safe, as all tribes were and are practically at war with each other, and not only was he safe, but I can say that a strong feeling of friendship was engendered between master and man. This was the more marked when in the wilds of the bush, and completely cut off from civilisation; the “boys” would not only protect their officer from hidden danger, but would also thoughtfully provide him with little luxuries in the shape of fish or game.

But I am bound to admit that they failed, in spite of all warnings, in one important matter: they would not keep watch at night. In spite of the best intentions, a few minutes after supper would find them stretched around their tiny camp fires buried in a profound slumber, their heads under the blanket which each man carried on his horse whilst patrolling.

Before entering the Police I had been through a very usual experience incidental to "new chums," which I will touch upon lightly. I was first drafted on to a sheep station, which was situated some miles inland from the township of Gladstone, to do some "foot rotting;" but however interesting and intellectual an occupation this might have proved I was never able to judge, for soon after I had set to work in paring sheep's diseased toes the station "bust up."

After this I helped to "overland" cattle. Here was rather more excitement in watching round the fires at night, and endeavouring to avoid hostile meetings with the blacks. One incident, however, in connection with this overlanding I must not omit to mention, if only to prove that a man should not be waked up too roughly. We had lit the fires

as usual one night round the cattle to prevent their breaking away. "An old hand"—anglice, old convict—whom we dubbed Jonah, had been watching at one of these fires, and had then fallen asleep. During the day we had seen many tracks of blacks, of whom Jonah stood in special dread.

A new chum, who had lately joined our party, in going his rounds, had thought it a great joke to paint the face of the sleeping beauty with a bit of burnt wood. There probably was a spark left in the fire stick; anyhow, Jonah, on feeling the touch, sprang to his feet yelling "Black fellows!" whipped out his revolver and shot the young joker. The ball went through the fleshy part of his thigh, and we had to invalid him to the nearest station, some fifty miles away.

Since witnessing this near approach to a tragedy, I have always endeavoured to wake any one gently, even in the old country, so strong is the feeling imbued within me to "Let sleeping dogs lie."

Having arrived at our destination after some two months of crawling work, we found that the cattle of which we had charge were going to be seized by the agent of a bank,

for an overdraft, we presumed, but did not stay to enquire, and having received our pay we dispersed.

Before we had got rid of these cattle, rumours had reached us that most promising gold diggings had "broken out" in the neighbourhood of Maryborough, a coast township situated between the twenty-fourth and twenty-sixth degree of south latitude, and whilst casting about for something to do, after being paid off, we found that these rumours resolved themselves into actual fact, for we learnt from reliable men, travellers who had lately been in the Wide Bay district, that a great rush had set in to the spot indicated. There is a great fascination in the term "diggings," especially was it so to one, like myself, who had never been on them. It meant gold, and though I had no thought of procuring any of the precious metal amongst a rush of old diggers, still I should surely see it in its native state.

The chief line of coasting steamers of the time belonged to the Australian Steamship Navigation Company. I made many trips in these boats during my sojourn in Queensland, and thus became acquainted with the genial

and worthy skippers ; a photographic group representing four of these officers, I still possess : Captains Chatfield, Champion, Cottier, and Quayle.

Therefore, rather than miss a chance of seeing gold being mined, a friend and myself placed our small amount of luggage on board one of these boats, and prepared to do our small share and "rush" with the rest. The steamer was crammed, and we had to shake down as best we could for two or three nights.

Having completed the sea part of the journey, we took horses, another friend joined us, and together we proceeded, as recorded in my journal of the time.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIGGINGS—GYMPIE CREEK

The Diggings—Gympie Creek—Descriptive of Gold Mines and their Working—"A Roll Up"—John Chinaman—The Surgeon Rushed

THE Gympie Creek diggings, situated on and about the Mary River, and, roughly speaking, about one hundred miles from Brisbane and fifty from Maryborough, may be looked upon as the richest gold field that up to this time has been discovered in the Colony, and "breaking out," as they did during a period of most severe commercial depression, in 1867, these diggings may be said to have almost entirely saved Brisbane from utter insolvency ; but for their discovery many of its business men would have gone into the Insolvency Court, whereas they have now branch stores on the diggings doing a thriving trade.

When these diggings were some few months old, I visited them in company with friends—

there were then from nine to ten thousand men on them. We started from the interior of the Burnett district, during one of the hottest and driest summers that had been known there; our entire journey, therefore, was a very hot and dusty one, but taking into consideration the dryness of the season, we found the country both well grassed and watered. Sometimes our track took us over barren ridges growing stunted iron-bark trees, and covered with stones, with here and there pieces of quartz cropping up; sometimes through tracts growing silver-leaved iron-bark and stunted blood-wood, sure sign of good country, whilst the "flats" looked amazingly green in contrast with the surrounding country; here the grass and the common fern grew luxuriantly, reminding one of a park in the old country, until, looking up, one sees the beautifully green and shady swamp mahogany and "apple" trees, when any distant dreams are quickly dispelled. We also passed through scrubs growing gigantic pine trees. The whole of the road, from beginning to end, was several inches deep in white dust as fine as flour, which obliged us to carefully wash our eyes every evening for fear of "sandy blight."

Approaching nearer to the diggings we found more bare ridges, growing gums and iron-barks of a great height and as straight as arrows. Crossing the Mary River, which we found at this point to be a beautiful running stream, whose banks were fringed by luxuriant vine-scrubs, we came upon the first sign of digging. This was a hole, resembling a grave, sunk in a gully; the earth thrown out was yellow, but the hole had been abandoned, evidently proving, in miner's slang, a "duffer." All the gullies also within ten miles of the diggings proper showed signs of having been tested; often hundreds of feet below us a heap of reddish earth would mark the spot, like a distant rabbit burrow.

On arriving within some four miles of the diggings we heard that we were in the neighbourhood of a new "rush"! It being our first visit to diggings, we wondered whether diggers actually ran across on these occasions; for we could hardly fancy that were even gold the object in view it would be sufficient to make a man run up and down stony gullies, thermometer standing at one hundred and twenty degrees, carrying pick and shovel. We, however, met parties of men walking along off

the track, as though nothing unusual had occurred ; but subsequent experience showed us that this apathy was only manifest after men had been constantly disappointed by false rumours, and that when the report was verified they ran as hard as they could, often in their hurry leaving behind blankets, "billies," picks, and everything, and continuing day and night till the golden spot was reached.

We met a few disappointed diggers returning, but they are always to be found on the best diggings. After quitting some sandy ranges we came down on to a flat, gullies from other ranges on our left running into it, and thus running out quite shallow. It was at the tail of one of these gullies that we first saw four claims were marked out by means of stakes driven in at the four corners of each claim. Two men were resting in the first hole we looked at, which was only two feet deep. All the other holes in the gully were in the same state, with the exception of one, but this one, at the very tail of the gully, was down twelve or fourteen feet, and a crowd of diggers were round its mouth ; these were waiting for the owners to "bottom," *i.e.*, reach the description of earth which contains the gold, and we were

afterwards told that old diggers from the other Colonies frequently made mistakes on these diggings, going right through the bottom, for the auriferous soil differs altogether on different diggings. In this case some of the earth was carried off in a sack to the nearest water-hole and washed, but was found only to contain the colour, and after trying other claims with the same result, this gully was abandoned.

From this spot to the township we passed numerous deserted claims, looking like graveyards, with here and there small water-holes the colour and consistency of pea-soup, rendered so by the quantities of dirt that had been washed in them ; drays were encamped in all directions, with numerous tents, many of the latter showing their New Zealand origin, by bearing the name "Hokitike Hokitike" upon them. Women and children were cooking ; the only men we saw here were stragglers in red shirts and long boots, and a few cutting bark from the iron-bark trees.

Ascending to the summit of a hill, we found ourselves in the town, and at one end of a very long street ; and though little more than two months old "Nashville" looked larger

than most of the coast towns, and certainly presented a most lively and animated appearance. Stretching along the side of a deep gully it looked something like a foreign town on a great market-day. On each side of us trees were being cut down, or their topmost limbs lopped off by a black fellow. Bark humpies, tents, and even flag-staffs were being erected, while many of the houses were of two stories, and shingled—a brass-plate on one bearing the inscription of “Surgeon and Accoucheur.” We learnt that the sites for the shops were secured by payment of £4 for the first year, *then*, if the digging turns out a success, these sites are offered for competition.

Some little way down the street we came upon a gully running right across it and terminating in the main gully, and so closely had the smaller one been worked on each side of the road, that barely sufficient room had been left for a dray to pass between the shafts, which were in many cases sixteen and twenty feet down. A little temporary shed was erected over the mouth of each shaft; this shelters the man who is winding up the buckets of dirt which his mate fills at

the bottom. Each shaft had a large heap of dirt round its mouth, and these were being gradually carried off by one-horse drays to the Mary river, there to be cradled and washed; these drays were earning £3 to £4 a day. We accompanied one dray with its precious load to the river, about a mile distant, passing on our way amongst endless tents and bark humpies, whilst holes were being sunk in every direction. Passing through a few yards of thick scrub overhanging the river, we found ourselves on its banks, at this part very steep. As far as the eye could reach, both up and down the stream, we saw one long line of diggers washing the dirt and rocking their cradles, the water perfectly yellow from the process.

The dray we had accompanied was backed to the brink, and its load tilted down a channel cut in the bank, being thus deposited at the feet of the washers who are usually mates of those who work the claim. All was being carried on with the utmost regularity and decorum, each claim having so many feet of the river to wash in. We counted about thirty drays near us going and returning. Two men and a boy were engaged washing

the particular heap that we were interested in. One of them had a long trough filled with water in which he raked the dirt backwards and forwards with a stick ; another used the cradle, while the boy had the tin dish. The cradle was placed at the edge of the water, and with short strokes rocked quickly to and fro. The upper part being a sieve allows the small stuff to fall through on to a lower shelf, but keeps back the pebbles, and, as we had an opportunity of witnessing in this case, many 'a plump nugget, which the "cradler" picked out with the most provoking coolness, and carelessly threw into a pint pot at his feet. The boy was occupied in washing the "tailings" of the cradle—"tailings" means the dirt which has undergone one washing and examination. These were washed in a tin dish by its being gently waved round and round in the water till everything is washed out, excepting the gold, which, owing to its weight, remains. We had selected this washing, as the dirt came from a very rich claim, turning out as much as eight ounces to the load, and gold was worth at this period £3 8s. an ounce at the Commercial Bank, the only one at the diggings at the time.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



QUEENSLAND N.M. POLICE AND BARRACKS (PRESENT DAY).

[To face p. 48.]

TO VINH AIRPORT

Some of the diggers on the Creek were "stacking their dirt," *i.e.*, heaping up a great quantity before carting it to the water. We saw one ordinary looking heap which an old digger valued at about £1,000, yet no gold could be seen in it, till washed ; but on passing these heaps after a shower of rain, the gold will frequently become visible.

True diggers are a fine set of men, and quiet and orderly as a rule. They always like to see fair play, and have certain rules amongst themselves, which they adhere to most strictly. While they have money they live on the very best of everything. Their slang is peculiar, and their expressions quaint.

I was one day gazing down a dark shaft, wondering whether any one was there, and as my eyes became accustomed to the gloom I saw there was a drive at the bottom, and fancying I heard a noise, asked, "Is any one down there?"

"Only a buck rabbit digging a hole for his self," was the answer, in which I omit a word, referring to the buck, which was extremely expressive, but scarcely parliamentary. Having received this answer, I

was thinking of retreating, when my digger backed out of his hole, and threw me up a nugget with " Not so bad, mate."

One can hardly understand such confidence displayed towards a total stranger, but in many other instances I noticed the same trait in their character. This nugget was followed by another, and I returned them by descending his rope. There was barely room for two of us, four feet by two being the proportion of the shaft, and twenty-four feet deep. I was permitted to crawl into the drive and pick out some dirt ; and having the luck to find a small nugget weighing about 5 pennyweights, was allowed to retain it. This man was clearing £30 or £40 a week ; but from the very short acquaintance I had with the work, I am satisfied alluvial digging is tremendous fatigue—at the bottom of a deep shaft, *lying* in a hole which just fits one, and picking the earth away within a few inches of one's face.

In the bottom of the gullies some of the digging was very hard, and we watched a man with his pick working at the rock in a shallow trench, and working steadily too ; and on returning the next day he had made

but little progress and found no gold, but he persevered and was at length rewarded.

Some remarkable cases have occurred at Gympie of gold-finding. One gentleman, connected with the Government, went there for a holiday, commenced digging, and shortly afterwards turned up the monster nugget of these diggings; it weighed considerably over eight hundred ounces.

It is astonishing with what rapidity the bakers, butchers, and storekeepers flock to the diggings, and we found them not only supplying all the necessaries of life, but also most of its luxuries, and at Gympie nothing was expensive. We stayed at one of the public-houses that was being built, and though too soon for beds, yet we lived as well as we could have done in any town, and as there were no mosquitoes we managed to sleep very comfortably with a blanket on the ground. Even at this early period of its history Nashville boasted of a *café de Paris* and a billiard table. Every evening the town presented a very gay appearance, from the numerous lights hanging from shop fronts and trees on each side of its long, straggling street.

But *the night par excellence* was Saturday night; the whole length of the street was so full of diggers that we could hardly move at all, and what with singing, swearing, fighting, drinking, bargaining for loaves, beef, and sausages for Sunday's dinner, the noise was tremendous, while every public-house was crammed with men discussing their various finds, and shouting in the double sense of the word, with "here's luck," "here's fun," "here's my opinion of you," or "to show there's no coolness," etc., while they frequently paid for their drinks with small samples of gold. In one house we came upon a huge Italian singing selections from the Operas to a delighted audience, who, though they could not understand the style of his singing, judging from the remarks they made, evidently appreciated his fine voice.

We entered a music-hall shortly afterwards (one shilling entrance), heard some good songs and recitations, witnessed some fair boxing, and the best step dancer that we had ever before seen performing to the lively tune of two fiddles. On a digging one often comes across a really good professional, who, failing to be successful in digging, makes money by

the exercise of his profession. One favourite vocalist of the diggers used to make his £1 or so a day by "fossicking," *i.e.*, digging here and there, but going to no depth, and at night he attracted crowded houses by his singing.

But what interested us a great deal more than any other branch of the diggings were the quartz reefs, and it is chiefly on the extent and richness of these that the permanency of a digging depends, for good reefs will last for very many years before they are worked out. On the alluvial diggings (dispersed amongst the quartz reef) men that we knew had worked out their claims and could not get others, but the owners of a good reef may be drawing gold from it for a very long period.

What are known as a "poor man's diggings" are alluvial, while the reefs require capital to work them.

A gentleman with whom we were acquainted was part owner in one of the richest reefs at Gympie, the "Lady Mary" reef. His shaft was near a deep gully, and he informed us that he first struck the reef by noticing the pieces of quartz lying in a peculiar position in the bank of this gully, and "pointing" in one direction ; his shaft was about twelve feet

deep, and while we were there it was not being worked, as there was no quartz-crushing machine on the diggings, and it is useless to heap up more than a certain quantity of quartz before a machine arrives.

The law in this case is, that a digger must "shepherd" his claim up to twelve o'clock every day—he *must* be on it, whether working it or not—if he fails to do this any one can "jump" it; by registering the claim this can be avoided. This shaft was a large open one; two easy drops, and we were at the bottom of it, but not prepared for what we saw. On a sheet of bark being removed, we were fairly transfixed with astonishment; the slab of quartz disclosed to view was about a yard and a half long, and about two yards deep. These were not, of course, its natural boundaries; it might go for miles in length and several yards deep, but this was the extent laid bare. This quartz was of a very white description, thus contrasting strongly with the gold, which was scattered all over its surface, chiefly in specks the size of two or three pins' heads, but sometimes in patches as large as a pea. There was scarcely a square inch of quartz without gold in it. On a piece of the quartz

being chipped off, we found the gold inside as thick as ever. So slow were capitalists to believe in the richness of these reefs, that four months after this only one crushing machine had made its appearance on the ground, and this could only crush about thirty tons a week ; and many diggers were actually for weeks crushing their quartz by hand in iron mortars. Some specimens of quartz that were shown us were so rich, that after being cracked by a blow, the piece would not separate till it was *twisted* in two, the gold inside holding it together.

Money can be made in various ways on diggings, apart from digging ; but I would warn any one from taking shares in a Quartz Reef Company without very great care, and ascertaining every particular by himself direct. On the other hand a great chance is sometimes lost ; a visitor to Gympie was offered a share in a reef for £5 before it was opened ; he declined. The reef was opened the same afternoon, and so very rich was the quartz found to be, that he could not then have purchased a share for £100.

Many men did well at the commencement of these diggings by carrying, driving cattle

and sheep, butchering, etc., but like the diggings themselves, these were soon overdone.

The Government have been latterly forming roads, laying out the town, and extending the telegraph to it. Gympie, though rich, does not extend over a great extent of ground so far, and hundreds have found there is no room, and have had to turn back. Some have been waylaid and murdered by the blacks for the sake of the miserable clothes they have on. One man, having been stripped of his clothes, appeared at a station we were staying at. He had plastered his body over with mud to protect it from the sun.

All the Chinese diggers were chased off by the Europeans during our stay—they numbered six hundred. It certainly was a funny sight to see.

“Roll up, roll up,” we heard roared all through the camp, and at once celestials were flying helter-skelter, taking flying leaps over claims, sometimes into them, when they would be dragged out by their pigtails and cuffed on again. At first they started laden with buckets, pots, bedding, and other gear; gradually this was cast aside as they whirled along with an incessant jabbering,

which was only equalled by the oaths and shouts of the pursuing party. Those who had coiled up their pigtails got off easiest, but when that appendage was flying behind, the owner sometimes came to grief, as the wagging tail was too tempting. The Chinese mob eventually out-distanced their pursuers, but "not the six hundred."

And there was yet another "roll up" after this, in which a professional man nearly lost his life, the surgeon before mentioned, he of the brass plate. A digger who had broken his leg in two places was hauled up from the shaft and lay groaning on the bank; his mates did their best for him by putting up boughs to shield him from the sun, whilst one of their number started off as hard as he could run for the surgeon; but presently this messenger tore back to the group and shouted out:

"The doctor won't come unless he's paid first."

"Won't he?" rose with a yell; and "roll up" went through the camp with a roar, as every man, with the exception of those left to guard the claims, together with their big dogs, made a rush for the brass-plated house. The doctor just received a warning in time,

but showed his further ignorance of the digger nature by firing with a shot gun in the face of the advancing mob. This infuriated them to such a degree that they replied with revolver shots at every window and door of the surgeon's house ; but when they at length broke in, they only found an innocent apprentice, his master having bolted out of the back door.

When the situation was understood the young medical student was carried off with the utmost kindness, he tended the wounded man till he was well, received a handsome reward, and, furthermore, so pleased the diggers that they set him up as their special doctor.

When we next looked for the house of the brass plate we only found ruins.

A Colonial newspaper stated in May, 1868, that there were within the small area comprising the Gympie gold-field no less than forty-two reefs being worked, and over four thousand ounces of gold were sent down every fortnight to Maryborough, and quoting from the *British Australasian* of May 9, 1901, I find that the total yield from the Gympie field to the end of 1899 was about two and a half million ounces. The value of the gold produced nearly eight and a half millions sterling.

CHAPTER V

FARTHER NORTH

To Port Denison—Gaffing the Cattle Dealer—Bourner's Hotel—
"Camping Out Song"—"The Overlander"—Troublesome
Blacks—Bottle Tree

HAVING thus seen what we could of the new diggings, and not having the courage to invest in any of the reefs or claims, we dispersed. Acting on the advice of one of my companions I determined to take passage in the first northern-bound steamer, and visit Port Denison and district. It was not long before one of these boats appeared at Maryborough, and going on board I met, amongst others, a cheery old squatter, Mr. R——, with whom I had travelled before.

After a chat and refresher he suddenly lowered his voice, and in a mysterious tone informed me that there was a rowdy lot of men from Sydney on board, and asked if I would take the upper berth in his cabin, as so far he had been able to keep the whole

place to himself, but quite lately threats had been uttered by some of the Sydney men that they would clear him out the first fine night, and annex the whole cabin. I turned in pretty early to the top bunk, glad to get into comfortable quarters once more, left the feeble lamp burning, and presently heard R—— climb into the lower bunk. After being asleep for a short time, I was roughly awakened by feeling all the blankets stripped off me, and a voice swearing "Out you come, young fellow, that's my bunk." I could see the indistinct forms of two men standing close alongside me.

Being sleepy, and savage too, I grabbed my blankets, swore back at the intruders, and called to R—— to hold their legs, as by this time I was seized by the two ruffians.

"He isn't here, you young fool," they cried, as they got me half over the side of my cot. But wasn't he? All of a sudden I saw a bright and large steel hook shoot out and disappear into the clothing of the man who was trying to wrench my arms away. It was a beautiful sight, and one I shall never forget. R—— had gaffed him in the stern! Then ensued the most terrific uproar. R—— held

his man firmly, whilst the victim blasphemed, swore, and roared like a bull. I was free, and jumped down on to the other man, who appeared paralysed, not knowing what had come to his mate. Meantime R—— was consigning the disturber of his rest to all sorts of awful places in language which I never thought could proceed from his lips, as he was what one calls a very “gentle spoken person” usually.

“Ha!” he thundered out with a final threat. “A one-armed man can’t fight much, but he can hook, eh?—you beggars. Hold this one while I fix up the barbed steel and jag it into the other.”

This was to me, but the other had knocked out the lamp and crept away in the turmoil. I got the steward and a light, when a most ludicrous scene presented itself. The man was standing there, not daring to move, for R—— had told him that if he tried to fight, the hook would tear itself out.

“Give me your name and that of the other blackguard, or I’ll hold you here till the captain’s roused up,” said R—— quite gently, now that he had got his man and blown the steam off. Names were written down, hook

taken out, blood wiped up, door barred, and after a little conversation we turned in again and were no more disturbed. About four in the morning R——, who was a facetious individual, called out, "It's time to milk the cows," and he left the cabin, presumably for a "doctor" and a pipe. I thought more would have come of this midnight adventure, but it appeared that my gaffer was a well-known man, and these rowdies, some of whom were cattle men, would never have really tackled him; but knowing him to be a late individual, and seeing his curtains drawn, they thought that I was the only occupant of the cabin. Before we arrived at Port Denison they begged R—— not to report them, and he took no further notice of the matter, beyond remarking to me that one of them would find it rather irksome to ride for a week or two.

Having arrived at the Port, and whilst casting about for something to do, I made my head-quarters for the time being at Bournier's Hotel, where every comfort of those days was to be found, and where Jack West reigned supreme behind the bar—a useful man of many points, and the most gentlemanlike chucker-out imaginable. Bournier's was the

one resort for all the bright spirits from the bush, and the hotel was likewise frequented by travelling merchants from north and south, so that one had most of the news from both town and bush. After the somewhat rough experience connected with overlanding it was pleasant to meet men of one's own standing once more, who could give useful tips to a new-comer. I can truly say that I date the pleasant years which I subsequently passed in Queensland from my associations with those I met at the bar of the Port Denison Hotel.

By the way, in the same connection, but in a milder form, if a man requires a country house in England let him not too much trouble the agents at first, but proceed with his "order to view" to the inn of any village which contains a house likely to suit his requirements, enter the bar, "shout" for any of the village patriarchs or others of the place, and then, by paying his footing and showing himself to be a white man and a brother, he will get more solid and true information of surroundings than by applying to outsiders; yet he need not necessarily give out that he is house hunting in that particular district, for obvious reasons. Many of my friends of those

Port Denison days I remember—Willie St. George, Terry, Carew, Poingdestre, Sheaf, Bell, and many others whose names I cannot at the moment call to mind. Several excursions I made with one or other of such practised bushmen, outings which lasted for one day or for three or four, according to circumstances, taking with us rations, blankets, and a spare horse or two, and always a gun and fishing tackle. What good company were these bush-mates socially, always cheerful and jolly, beguiling the camp fire period with songs, recitations, yarns of the bush, and stories of other lands. Then the bush game we shot, birds we collected for skinning purposes, and fish we caught in the lagoons and Don River.

It was whilst with St. George at St. Ann's station that I first saw an emu run down by a couple of kangaroo hounds. The bird had gone down to drink at a waterhole. St. George had his hounds with him, and when, like a new chum, I remarked "Now is the time to bail him up," he said, "No, wait till he's filled," and we did; so that when the hounds were slipped the unfortunate bird, being full of water, made a very poor show

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



QUEENSLAND N.M. POLICE (PRESENT DAY).

[To face p. 64.]

TO YINU ABBOGILAO

of running and was soon pulled down. We took off his skin for a mat and a portion of breast for the pot, but I found the good salt beef of the station more to my taste. Regaining the Port, we joined a small party which was about starting in a south-westerly direction to prospect both soil and water, the chief object of this little expedition being to take up a bit of country, should circumstances prove favourable.

Knowing that the blacks were bad, we were well armed. Making a late start, we considered it advisable to camp upon the first creek we came across, for we did not know how far we might have to go to the next water; and night was quickly overtaking us. As we afterwards discovered, the bed of the creek was very scrubby and quite dry for miles up from where we camped. Immediately above our waterhole there was a broad patch of sand and then came the scrub, shading the bed of the creek. Below, the channel disappeared in a gloomy ravine. We made our fire under a log close to the water and far from cover of any sort.

Having finished our supper of "Johnny cakes," beef, and tea, one of our number struck

up that song which I have always considered the best in the bush—"The Overlander." During the overlanding trip which I have mentioned we had few opportunities of singing it; for though it belonged strictly to that phase of bush life and described the incidents connected with it pretty accurately, we had on that occasion too much trouble with the cattle to indulge in much sing-song. I may mention that I have never heard it at home, but have retained both words and air in my memory. I trust that the old ditty still holds its own at the camp fire in the solitudes of the Australian bush. The words are as follows :

I

There is a trade you all know well, 'tis bringing cattle over,
So I'll tell you all about the time when I became a drover.
I made up my mind to try a spec., so from Grafton I did wander,
And brought a mob of nuggets there to begin as an overlander.

Chorus.

Then pass the wine cup round, my lads; don't let the bottle
stand there,
For to-night we'll drink the health of every overlander.

II

When our cattle we had counted, and had the outfit ready to
start,
I saw the lads all mounted, and their swags put in the cart.
All sorts of men I had from France, Germany, and Flanders—
Doctors, lawyers, good and bad, in my mob of overlanders.

Chorus.

III

From the ground I then fed out where the grass was green
and long,
But they swore they'd break my snout if I did not move along.
Says I, you are too hard ; take care, don't rouse my dander,
For I'm a regular knowing card, a Victorian overlander.

Chorus.

IV

The pretty girls at Yamba were hanging out their duds ;
I longed to have a chaff with them, so steered straight for
the tubs ;
When some dirty children saw me, and soon they rose my
dander,
Crying " Mammy, quick ! take in your clothes ! here comes an
overlander."

Chorus.

V

Just then a squatter rode up ; says he, " You're on my ground,
I've two black boys as witnesses, so consider your stock in
pound."
I tried to coax, then bounce him, but my tin I had to squander,
For the beggar put threepence a head on the mob of the
overlander.

Chorus.

VI

Now you know we pay no licence, and our run is rather large,
'Tisn't often they can catch us, so, of course, can't make a charge.
They think I live on store beef, but no ! I'm not a gander,
For when a straggler joins the mob, " He'll do," says the
overlander.

Chorus.

VII

In town we drain the wine cup, and go to see the play ;
We ne'er think what 'tis to be hard up, nor how to spend
the day.
We court a girl that's fresh and fair, and does not think of
grandeur,
With eyes so bright and skin so white, "She'll do," says the
overlander.

Chorus.

At a later hour that night we were talking in low tones over pipes, previous to rolling ourselves in our blankets, when we distinctly heard the cracking of sticks a long way up the creek, evidently something approaching cautiously ; so we seized our arms and hurried into the gloom, out of the lights of the fire. There we squatted, and by this time we could plainly hear steps approaching and even the rustling of small boughs. At length the footsteps approached the very brink of the scrub and stopped. He is now reconnoitring, we calculated. It was a moment of intense excitement ; we held our breaths and waited, with muzzles pointed for the black or blacks who, we were certain now, were within a few yards of us ; when out from the black jungle issued a wild, shrill scream, followed by the huge carcase of a wild bull, which stopped immediately on gaining the open ground, evidently

startled by the sudden appearance of our now small fire. We then fired at him, and with a yell almost equal to his own, rushed towards the beast, half crazed at being able to give vent to our long pent-up feelings. He then went back through that scrub in a few bounds, more frightened than hurt. He had only meant to drink at our waterhole, but we did not care about being disturbed in this mysterious manner, so gave him a rough notice to quit.

The next day our course took us for two hours through that species of bush known as grass-tree country. This bull-rush topped plant grows on stony ridges where there is but little grass, the only sign of life being the monotonous chirruping of the tree crickets, whilst a few wallaby of a small species were hopping about here and there. It was a relief to come at length to a creek with a strong running stream in it, the bed composed of huge masses of basaltic rock ; the vegetation was very rank and beautiful about this river, which was full of fish, and the contrast was so refreshing to the wretched grass-tree country that we camped there a whole day and caught many large black bream,

which fought fiercely in the boiling pools. The bait consisted of beef or wild ducks' entrails.

After this we passed through Brigalow scrubs and over rich black soil plains till we made the Bowen. This river has an enormous bed, but excepting in times of flood consists of large waterholes or lagoons, joined by a tiny stream. Alternately riding, camping, and spelling, we came to the foot of the Leichhardt range. The heat was intense, and we camped for an hour before crossing it. Next day we made Mount Wyatt and observed signs of copper, the ore lying on the surface of the ground, and some time afterwards we reached our point, the Suttor. This river has also a broad bed, with large trees in it, and at the time of our visit but little water.

We camped for a week on various parts of its bank, our time being much taken up in hunting for horses which had strayed. The heat was intense, waterholes drying fast and leaving quantities of fish, which were preyed upon by dingoes, guanans, also hawks, jabaroos, and other birds. One day the heat was so intense that some emus, under the

shade of a scrub, only trotted gently away upon our riding at them and let us approach to within about fifteen yards. A tree, marked L., was found in one part of this river, supposed to be a trace of the unfortunate Leichhardt. During our exploration of this district we came suddenly upon a mob of blacks, who were fishing in a small lagoon. On perceiving us they dropped their little hand-nets and ran off to some distance. We were particularly careful not to interfere with them in any way, though the black boy who accompanied us was most anxious to pursue them, and being denied that pleasure, requested leave to take some of their fish. This was also denied him, and we passed on thinking that they would resume their fishing and take no further notice of us. However, as it proved later, we were mistaken. We camped towards evening and were particular in selecting a very open camping ground, there being no cover within a quarter of a mile of us—in fact, we had to go some way to cut saplings for pitching our tent.

Dawn was just breaking, our black boy had got up for a drink of water, but immediately rushed back to the tent, seized

a carbine, and in doing so woke us, when we grasped our fire-arms and rushed after him. The blacks had formed a ring around us, with the intention of closing in. They were painted, as is usual on these occasions, in an uncanny manner—white lines drawn down their thighs and shins and across their ribs, and patches of white daubed on their jaws and cheek bones, giving them the appearance of skeletons; there was just sufficient light to see this. Directly we fired they all took to flight, nor could we see a sign of them a minute afterwards, though we rushed in the direction in which they vanished. We found a spear driven through a corner of the tent as a reminiscence. Even in the excitement it was noticed that one carbine made a report like a cannon, throwing the gunner backwards and belching forth a perfect volume of flame. We discovered that the owner had left the plug in the muzzle and fired it off in this state. He was spared any chaff, for we believed that it was owing to the deafening roar of his piece that the blacks decamped so quickly, and they certainly did not trouble us again.

There was a large bottle tree near this

camp, and our black boy showed us how the wild blacks procure water from it in the following way. They cut holes in the soft trunk, where the water lodges, and rots the trees to the centre, forming so many artificial reservoirs. Afterwards, during the dry season, and when engaged on their hunting excursions and thirsty, they tap them one or two feet below the old cuts and procure an abundant supply.

Some of our party being apparently satisfied with the nature of the country we had passed through, as suitable for cattle, we returned home, first making a *détour* to visit a sugar plantation on the Don River.

CHAPTER VI

RECREATIONS

The Great Cockle—"Salisbury Plains" Rough Riders—A Little Fishing—Jimmy Morrill—"Young Bloods"—Northern "River Mob"—"Bottle Chorus"—I am Cast into Prison—The Pattern M.C. and Our Ball—Southern "River Mob"

ON our return to Port Denison we found that a curious incident had occurred. A black fellow had made his way in from far up the coast with all the toes on one foot crushed. It appeared that he was known in the town, having been wood and water "Joey" at one of the stores some months previously. Then he had gone away on a fishing excursion.

Poking about with a hand-net amongst the weeds at low tide, his foot had been suddenly trapped by the giant cockle, "*Tridacna Gigas*," into which he had stepped. Two of his companions were on the beach cooking fish, and in answer to his yells, rushed out with their stone tomahawks and a piece of iron from a wreck, for they knew the sort of beast that had got him. By dint of much hammer-

ing and splintering with the iron rod they succeeded in clipping off enough from the mouth of the shell to set free the black's foot ; after this he had managed to drag himself into the town, where he had been kindly treated on his previous visit. Cases had occurred, and frequently, on this coast, where men engaged in collecting *bêche de mer* or hunting for other spoils of the sea at low tide had been held by the leg by this huge cockle till drowned by the incoming tide.

I mentioned this little fact in a novel, the scene of which was laid in North Queensland ; a friendly critic, after perusing it, remarked, "You should have made Mr. Tridacna swallow the hero whole while you were about it."

I took the unbeliever to the South Kensington Museum, to Dr. Günther, who had been kind enough to assist me with the scientific names of the different fishes referred to in the book above-mentioned ; and my friend was convinced when the worthy Professor showed him cockles three feet in length along the corrugated lips, each shell being some inches in thickness. "A beast that could hold a bullock," as my critic was fain to admit.

Having seen the black fellow attended to

and left under the care of the doctor, we organised a party to hunt for the cockle, as we thought we had placed the spot from the description given us by the black. We took a seine net with us, determined to bring something back. Many hours were spent rowing under a broiling sun, peering into the water and prodding with boat-hooks, but all to no purpose. We had a Malay fisherman amongst our crew, and owing to his experience we made some excellent hauls of many sorts of fish—mullet preponderating—and as he had rigged a fly net over the seine, very few of these escaped in their usual way.

This was the pleasantest occupation of the day, for we were up to our necks in water, on a sandy bottom, with no fear of cockles, as these must have rocks to attach themselves to. The Malay, with an eye to town business, kept us at this seining work till the tide stopped further proceedings, and then he calmly remarked that he knew of a big cockle in full view. This was great news, but our hopes were dashed when he explained that it was impossible to secure it, and so it proved. He piloted us far out to deep water, where a few small pinnacled rocks showed their

heads, then quietly rowing up to one he bid us look down into the clear depths. It was not very easy to see the beast ; only the shaded outline, until the man pushed a sort of sea telescope of his own construction into the water, and then we very clearly made out the big fish. All we could do was to rub the longest oar in the boat on its shell ; this seemed to alter its position. There he was, and there he will remain till a man clad in a diving dress and armed with a pickaxe shall dislodge him. However, we went home, so far satisfied that we had viewed T. Gigas at home. We put this one down at thirty inches in length, and twenty-four across the shell, but depth of water throws all measurements out, as is well known—in salmon fishing, to wit.

During my stay at Port Denison I met a young stockman, who asked me to give a hand at a cattle station a few miles out, named "Salisbury Plains," and there I remained for some weeks, assisting as much as I could with the work and striving to follow the cutting-out tactics of the stockriders amongst the various mobs of horses and cattle ; and here I witnessed such riding of buckjumpers as I had never seen before. It has frequently

occurred to me since, that if a man could bring a really bad buckjumper home, and land him, with all his peculiar ways in him, that man would make a small fortune—for in England the worst specimens one sees are merely “pig-jumpers,” with more play than vice.

The rough riders came to the “Plains” from another district, annually, for the purpose of bestriding some half dozen of these demons, which belonged to the run. The show went on all day and every day until the animals were supposed to be subdued, but my impression was that this system of training had only a temporary effect ; and there was ample proof of this a few days afterwards.

I had seen horses buck before this, but never half-a-dozen of the worst specimens run in and then yarded up and ridden one by one. The same thing happened every day. The riders stuck on magnificently, with never a fall, in spite of every diabolical trick of the horses to get rid of them, varied by ceaseless and stupendous bucks. These were in every variety of style ; usually opening with head and tail nearly meeting under the belly ; the legs as stiff as pokers lifting the arched carcase many feet from the ground, then bucks

straight ahead, then on a pivot, then, worst of all, bucks to right and left with such a twisting screw in them that one wondered whether the horse itself would not be thrown. Each horse, however, was ridden out.

Each man, as he vaulted off, one could see had been undergoing a tremendous strain, and more than one rider spat blood previous to lighting his pipe. I saw one who had had an unusual doing, but who had sat firm in spite of all, rip in the "hooks" to try and spur his steed to another effort. However, the horse was fairly played out and only responded with a savage bite, whereupon the rider slid off, picked up a stout pole, and belaboured his late mount all round the yard, when an onlooker quickly let down the rails, and the jaded beast walked out, saddle, bridle, and all.

I fancy that this system of breaking in, or rather rough riding, for a note or thirty shillings a head no longer prevails in Queensland. The horses are seldom, if ever, permanently cured, and the riders have to give up such "shocking" treatment of their own bodies at a comparatively early age.

Green hide enters largely into the manufacture

of harness for such animals, owing to its non-breaking power. I had a very fair stock horse on this run, but he had one very nasty trick. Whenever, as was usually done with all horses, his bridle was put over a post or fence, he would wait till the coast was clear, break it with a jerk of the head, and then gallop away, a very unpleasant trick, entailing much walking and language of all sorts. Now my gee, unfortunately for himself, took the opportunity to show off before the rough riders, who immediately rounded him up and brought him back.

“We can soon cure that little game if you like,” they said, and I told them to proceed. Selecting a green-hide halter, they clapped it on and fastened it together with an ordinary bridle to a fence. Very soon, up went the horse’s head, broke, as was meant, the leather rein, and when he found that repeated jerks only tightened the green hide, he got into such a fury that he at length threw himself down, tugging and yelling whilst on the ground. One of the men then took a stock whip and thrashed him up again. Inside of an hour he was so completely cured that a bit of string would have held him for the rest of the time

that he was in my possession, and from this fact alone he proved one of the most dependable horses in the patrol which I accompanied later on.

I got "bushed" during a fishing excursion near this station, and it doubtless did me a lot of good and made me take more notice of land tracks for the future.

Hearing that there was a waterhole full of fish, lying a good way off on the seaboard, I started with tackle and bait one fine morning, found the lagoon, after much search, late in the afternoon, caught a quantity of all sorts of fish, and was so engrossed with the sport that I failed to notice that night had suddenly closed down without any warning, as it does in the tropics of Queensland. Thereupon I lit a fire, as the fish were still on the feed; but hardly had the flame shot up when several small fires seemed to respond on the great salt bush plain, apparently in the very direction of home, and yet not far from me, as I could judge.

Knowing that these belonged to black fellows, I quickly gathered up my spoils and started for home by what proved to be a very roundabout route. Of tracks there were none, as

the cattle never came in the direction I was in. I fell into a gully at starting which luckily was full of sand, or the twelve-foot fall would have been bad. After wandering about all night I came to a dray track, as it proved to be upon my lighting matches to examine what I had put my foot into. Dawn soon after broke, and the tracks eventually took me to the station, where I got a big drink and a sleep. It is curious how thirst attacks one under these circumstances. I had drunk my fill at the waterhole and yet was parched with thirst half-an-hour afterwards. I heard upon my arrival that some of my mates were still out, having been riding about all night and cracking their stock whips in hopes that I should hear them.

I made a mental note—"Next time ride and take a compass." My love of fishing made me careless on that occasion, as it did again some weeks later in a more northern district, when I had a close shave as will be seen.

Some of the stations at this time "bust up," being for the most part in the hands of the banks, and I returned to Port Denison and there made the acquaintance of Jimmy Morrill,

who, after living for seventeen years with the blacks, had come into the town and was now looking after the church. It was curious to watch him as he sauntered along one of the grassy streets of the town; ever and anon would he cast his eyes aloft and scan the spouts of the gumtrees within view looking for "sugar bag"—wild bees' nests—never, in fact, did he lose this or other wild man's habits, which he had learnt during long years as a captive. I went on several excursions with Morrill, and was put up to much bush lore and many wrinkles in his company, but he would not open his mouth much until he knew you a bit. In most of his ways he much resembled a black fellow and was pretty nearly as dark as they are.

I met a contingent of young squatters and bushmen about this time who had come into the Port upon business connected with their stations some of which were situated far up country; so, together with the old frequenters, the place was pretty well filled. The advent of these young bloods meant that the town would be pleasantly upset for a week at least. They came chiefly with the intention of enjoying a "flutter" as soon as their business

was accomplished, and this gay intention was carried out with extreme elasticity. One could hear them approaching the town long before they came in sight and they had an inspiring way of making known their ultimate arrival.

On the first night each man would arm himself with an empty bottle and rattle it down the weather-boards of any house that was handy, in perfect time to the chorus of some popular bush ditty. This sounded like the rolling of many drums and was highly thought of—by the performers.

There was one song which it was specially suited to, thus :

Oh, Shanandoah, I love your daughter.

Bottle Chorus

Hooray, the rolling river,

We love "Three star" with a tot of water.

Bottle Chorus

Ha, ha, I'm bound away, across the Western ocean.

I was plying my bottle with good heart one night when a young and lately imported policeman came up, and tapped me on the shoulder, with "I must tak yer Hanar to the lock-up."

"Yes, do," chimed in all my comrades to

the man of law. "We've heard you've built an iligant one, and we want to see it, only you mustn't take that bottle away yet till he's finished his part of the song with us. Don't talk, but stop and mind your prisoner."

And he did, and had to listen to a final crashing roll of the drums.

Then the "river mob," for as such were they known, formed ranks and marched me along to songs of their own composing; to the tune "John Peel." The words of one verse I remember:

D'y ken how sherry and gin agree,
With a dash of rum thirty-five O.P.;
D'y ken how it is when ye mix all three
That your eyes they are weak in the morning.

They had some fifteen verses of this song, and so we proceeded, headed by the majesty of the law. Presently the latter drew up with an important air at a ten by twelve foot building. This was entirely composed, walls and roof, of corrugated iron sheets. As soon as the door was opened, and before I knew where I was, I felt myself hurled into the darkness and my captor was sent sprawling on the top of me, then the door was locked.

I could hear the juvenile policeman gurgling out, "Saints in glary," together with many Irish oaths, mingled with threats of what he would do when he got out and saw the inspector—I believe there were two members of the force, all told, in the town—but these groaning swear words—for the wind was knocked out of him by falling on me—were soon drowned in the most terrific uproar imaginable. The boys had brought their bottles with them, and policeman X—— and I had to listen to the infernal din of a new song thundered into our very ears, the bottles this time being plyed on corrugated sheeting, and not on weather-boards, by many powerful arms.

At length there was silence, then a voice which I recognised roared out, "Up, boys, and at 'em," and with one crash the prison came down like a pack of cards, and we crawled out, luckily unhurt, from underneath the ruins, only to be seized, bobby and all, hoisted on to the shoulders of my brother law-breakers and carried off to the hotel bar to the tune of "To the West, to the West, to old Jack and a spree," where the policeman considerably brightened up on a glass of good

liquor being offered him. He was made to sing a song before being allowed to go free, and he gave us something about "London's burning," the end of each chorus being "Let's hope that we may never see a fire down below."

A new store had just been completed in the town. This was seized by the river mob, terms were easily arranged with the owner, and preparations made to give a free ball. All hands worked hard, there was no committee, no question as to who was to be invited—all were welcome. Floor, supper, champagne, and music were the really important matters. We French-chalked the floor and slid about on it for some hours, till it shone like an ice slide. Refreshments were provided by the hotel ; fiddles, concertinas, and trumpets constituted the music. We had noticed an individual loafing about the town, dressed in seedy black clothes, and hearing that he was a musician he was appealed to as to whether he would play the fiddle.

"I played first *violin* in the Opera at home, gentlemen," was his reply, delivered in tones denoting a man of education, "but if you would allow me, I would prefer to act in the capacity of M.C. at your ball. I have been dancing

master and everything of the sort in the old country," he concluded, with a sorrowful smile.

We jumped at him!! Here was a prize indeed. What tone this would give to the hop!

On the doors being opened on the evening in question, one of the first to walk into the ball-room was our lately captured M.C., dressed, to our astonishment, in faultless evening clothes and immaculate white tie. This gentlemanlike appearance so enraged a stockman, who had come in very much primed for the show, that he marched straight up to him, and, after critically examining his clothes, remarked in an aggressive tone :

"And what ship did you come out in, and who the devil are you?"

"I'm the M.C.," loftily responded our ally, as he drew himself up.

"Well, it seems to me you're an M.T.-headed Jackaroo a-goin' in for yer deboo."

"So I am," responded our swell, as he knocked the facetious one head over heels ; and then turning to the assembled company : "That was only the overture, ladies and gentlemen. Now take your places for the first set."

Our man was a great success, for he kept

every one in a good humour, introduced every man in the room—though introductions, by the way, were unnecessary—expostulated with infuriated masters and mistresses who came to the door at intervals in search of their helps, and prevailed upon most of them to come in and partake of champagne, of which there was no lack. The girls, who seldom got such a treat, danced without ceasing; no matter if some amongst them knew but little of their steps, they all enjoyed themselves. Only one young lady, who had lately landed, objected to our M.C.'s promiscuous system of introduction, for when he brought up one of the river mob, with "May I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Smith to you," the fair one replied, "But I have not the pleasure of knowing *you*, sir." "Not the slightest reason why you should not know my friend Mr. Smith," he promptly replied, and the young lady was conquered by his logic.

Then he taught us a new dance, the like of which I have never seen before nor since. "Manchester Gallop," he called to the band. The music consisted of a concertina, two fiddles, and trumpets of sorts. He paid particular attention to the musicians during the whole

night, which was another proof to us that he was a gentleman of discernment, and with a lordly bow to a damsel who was standing behind the bar he led her forth to teach us his "latest composition," so he expressed it in reverent tones.

We watched him—steps easy to imitate but difficult to describe—thus, four march steps forward, seven gallop quick steps back, four forward again, seven quick back again, then ordinary gallop round and round till the music enforced the more resting steps once more. Every one quickly learnt it, and as it at all events had the merit of plenty of go, it proved a favourite dance from that time onwards.

Our evening dress was completely put into the shade by that of our M.C. The fact was we had had a lot of shirts made up of stuff called French merino, a rotten material it proved too; these with moleskin breeches and thin knee boots constituted our full dress, a cool one at all events. After indulging in chorus songs and drinks all round, we brought the ball to an end about four in the morning, went straight down to the beach and disported ourselves in the sea.

I should fancy that these pleasurable amuse-

ments of the old days are no longer continued in Queensland ports. When I eventually came home to England I asked a beefeater at the Alhambra if the bars were taken by storm periodically as they used to be both there and at Evans's. "No," was the answer of the corpulent official; "you've got to 'be'ave' yourself now." And I expect that my bush friends have got to "be'ave" themselves in Queensland. If so, they will mourn the good old times.

I may mention here that my final years spent in the Colony, where I built a bungalow and made a home, were passed amongst another river mob in a beautiful district farther south than Port Denison. A river mob of good and true friends, who carried out the same programme as their more northern compatriots. On some occasions we rode to the Port mounted every man on a white horse, to inaugurate a ball or flutter of some description, not forgetting the bottle chorus. Some of these old friends and backers I have the happiness of meeting in the old country at the present time.

CHAPTER VII

THREE BLACK FIENDS

A Senior N.M.P. Officer—Sailors in their Struggle for Life

STROLLING one day into the hotel to hear the news, I made the acquaintance of a grey-haired, military-looking man, who proved to be an officer of the N.M.P. Introductions were not wanted in Queensland in those days; you simply gave your name. Upon my telling him that I was looking for a job he informed me that he was on the point of starting into the new country with his "boys," for the purpose of escorting a surveyor and his men, and that if I liked to come along and give a hand I could. The escort was to consist of some seven or eight single "boys."

Following up on a few questions I put to him as to the simple outfit I should require, he went on to tell me that we should without doubt get amongst coast blacks, who constituted the finest race of the aborigines, partly owing to the profusion of fish which

formed their chief diet, but that though they were fine-grown, upstanding men they were the same as those in other parts of the Colony—treacherous, jealous, and cunning.

“Here is a late proof of their diabolical ways,” he continued, as he drew a copy of the *Brisbane Courier* from his pocket. “Read that.”

I kept the paper and this is what I read.

“A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

“A schooner was about to proceed from Cardwell, on the mainland, to an island some 200 miles east to procure guano. Before she left, three blacks came off and pleaded that they might help the crew of ten white men. All went well for a time, and the vessel at length brought up at the island, when two white men, accompanied by two of the blacks, went ashore and camped—these two sailors were eventually found, the attitude of their bodies indicating that they had been murdered in their sleep.

“No one on the schooner suspected anything, for the white men slept; probably the one black on board was waiting for his

comrades. Softly they stole about their murderous work. Two white men were asleep on the deck, and both were struck so that they made no sound. One—Shaw—says that he knew nothing till he came to his senses two hours afterwards, waking in a sort of dream, finding himself one mass of clotted blood, and chopped all over the head and arm. What saved him was that he had wrapped a rug and thick flour bag over his shoulders as he lay down, and the bag was dented with the blows of the blunt axes. Gradually the situation dawned upon him. Thanks to the darkness of the night he managed to crawl into the forecastle, although a black, spying him just as he went, aimed a blow at him which missed. Thinking he was too far wounded to be worth troubling about, the murderers left him and he managed to crawl aft through the hold and get into the cabin. But I must go back.

“After the blacks had left the two men, Troy and Shaw, for dead on the deck, they went down into the hold, where another sailor was sleeping, and attacked him. He was fearfully chopped on the face, head, and arm; one finger was cut off, and a huge gaping gash made in his back. Him they left for

dead, but he subsequently crawled through the hold aft into the cabin. Meanwhile the acting second mate, who was asleep in the forecastle, heard him cry out, and rushed on deck. In a moment he saw a black fellow by his side with an uplifted axe over his head. He dodged the blow, and sang out 'Captain, the blacks are murdering us.' Then all three rushed on him. How he escaped is a miracle. He had numerous small flesh wounds and a severe chop on the arm ; only the most wonderful agility and presence of mind saved him. Once the murderers had him down on his back on the deck, and two paused to let the third get a good chop at him. Even this he managed to dodge by shifting his leg, escaping with a flesh wound on the inside of the thigh.

"While this was going on, the mate, awakened by the noise, rushed past and got into the fore rigging, where another man had escaped. Deasy struggled out of the grasp of the fiends and ran for the forecastle, one black following him. Getting out his knife, which up to that moment he had not been able to draw, he struck at his assailant, but missed the stroke, and, striking on the axe, lost his

knife. Then, picking up a small grindstone lying there, he struck the black and staggered him, thus managing to get into the forecastle. A hurried search showed him there was no weapon to be found, and he came out again to make a rush for the rigging.

“ In his haste and in the darkness he rushed for the port side, where one of the blacks was part of the way up and another on the bulwark, preparing to ascend, with the intention of attacking the mate and another man on the foreyard. Deasy sprang past the black on the bulwark and grappled the one on the rigging, but before he could wrest the axe out of his hand the second black wounded him in the heel. Finding that the next moment he would be killed, he scrambled up and reached the foreyard, where he cut blocks with the mate’s knife, and the men used them as weapons to keep back the blacks, who after awhile made no attempt to ascend.

“ During this struggle the captain, awakened by the noise, came up, and as he laid his hand on the top of the companion it was chopped by a blow from an axe. He retreated into the cabin, where he remained with his son, and was subsequently found by the two sorely

wounded men, Shaw and Purcell. They vainly endeavoured to load a pistol, striking matches, but not daring to light a lamp. But the flowing blood clogged the pistol and damped the powder, and they could do nothing. The steward had shut himself up in the galley; three men were on the foreyard—Deasy, almost fainting and lashed to prevent falling, and poor Troy lay on the deck near the galley. There was a sort of lull.

“The men on the foreyard thought that all hands, except themselves, the Captain and his boy, were dead, and the blacks, compelled to pause in their active attack, began to look for the bodies of their victims. Shaw had by this time crawled away, and on searching the hold they found Purcell also gone; there remained only Troy lying motionless near the galley. How long he had recovered his senses no one could tell, but he was not dead. The murderers came to where he lay, and with one blow of an axe chopped off his foot. The steward trembling in his galley heard the poor fellow groan ‘O God, I’m finished now.’ They then chopped his body and clove his head till all life—all semblance even of humanity—was battered out of him.

“At last day began to dawn, the three blood-stained demons holding the deck—the steward hidden in his galley—the three men on the yard—the captain and his boy in the cabin, with the two poor wounded men weltering in their blood beside him. The grey light of morning made objects visible, and the blacks thought to finish their work. Picking up stones and pieces of coal from the hold, they began to pelt the men on the yard, who dodged the missiles as best they could. Then two blacks ascended the rigging with their axes, while the third remained on deck pelting the whites. These, compelled to disregard the stones, confined themselves to keeping the axes at bay with their sling blocks. Then the blacks found that the steward was in the galley. One went to guard the companion, while the other burst open the galley door. The steward jumped through the other door, rushed to the companion, dodged the blow aimed at him by the guard, and tumbled below.

“Now there was hope for the whites. Daylight was brightening and an unwounded man had reached the cabin, where there was a revolver and ammunition. But deliverance

was not for some time. For nearly an hour the men on the foreyard had to keep at bay two of the blacks who were assailing them, while the third kept guard over the companion, cunningly shielding himself from the loaded revolver of the steward. At last an incautious movement of the guard exposed his head, and the next second a bullet crashed through his brain. The two blacks exchanged a hurried sentence in their own language and one went to pick up his fallen comrade. The sailors in the foreyard dropped down the rigging. The mate, first on deck, picked up a hand-spike and staggered the third man with a blow on the head, and the others closed round him. The one who had gone to the dead guard left him, saw that the game was up, and jumped overboard. Two of the blacks were now dead and the steward emptied his revolver at the third while he swam, but did not succeed in hitting him. He was never seen again.

“Then the survivors went to the island, found the bodies of their comrades in the hut, and made sail for Cairns with the wounded. On arrival there an inquiry was held and the three worst wounded were sent to the hospital.

“ I have only to add that the tribe to which the murderers belonged were of well-known ferocity, having murdered several white men before this. No doubt also the same ferocious savages had a share in the murder of Conn and his wife near Cardwell. But I think that such an onslaught by three blacks on ten whites, at a place divided by some hundreds of miles of sea from the country of their tribe, is quite unexampled in the history of Australia.”

It came out upon inquiry that all the fire-arms, excepting the one revolver, had been handed over to a sister ship, and the blacks had witnessed this transfer before the schooner started on her ill-fated voyage. These three self-invited aborigines, it was also proved, had been most kindly treated from the beginning, and the brave-hearted sailors simply suspected nothing, as was proved by their carelessness in going to sleep without guard of any sort, and yet it will hardly be credited that there were certain individuals leading a snug life in some of the Queensland towns, who, both before and after this most fiendish and diabolical onslaught, vowed they would endeavour to get any white man hanged who shot a black fellow, even in self defence, as I heard.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST PATROL

My first Patrol—The Burdekin River—Perching Ducks—Quickly-made Canoe—Wild Horse "Venison"—Arrive on Coast—Site of present Townsville—Short Rations—Shark Fishing—A Spin for Life—The Stalker Stalked—The Leichhardt Tree—Lost Fishing Tackle—Wild Blacks Again

AND now to return to the proposed patrol which was to be the first to open up that Port, long since known as Townsville.

Our surveyor, who wished to make his point at a special part of the Queensland coast lying a little to the north of Lat. 20 S., determined our course with his sextant and also navigated us by the stars at night.

It proved slow travelling. We had one small dray to carry our rations, a tent, and odds and ends. These latter are described in the Colony by the one useful old naval word, "manavilins," a term which embraces every small thing.

Our small cart had to be dragged by a horse through dense scrubs, a track having to be

TO YOU ABORIGINAL

FIRST PATROL

[Ch.

cut for it previously. This entailed great labour, for besides growing bush and fallen trees, the lawyer canes ran in and out of everything. Then would appear acres of bog, and blady grass running eight and ten feet high.

Carefully as we tried to steer our little craft, the tilt which covered it was soon reduced to shreds, and provisions torn right out and strewn upon the ground. Further trouble awaited us at the Burdekin River, for there the vehicle nearly foundered, so that on gaining the further bank we were glad to camp and have a general drying up.

Here we revelled in wild fowl, many of which the "boys" shot in the trees, for Burdekin and whistling duck both perch. The "boys" were the mainstay of our party, of course. Before crossing the river they cut a large sheet of bark from a gum tree, left it exposed for a few hours to the sun, with a stick here and there to prop it into shape, and behold a good canoe; then, filling this with carbines and ammunition, they swam over with it to the camp.

Before sighting the Pacific we secured fresh meat in a curious manner. One of the "boys"

shot a young colt, as wild as a deer, to the astonishment of even the old pioneers of our party. At that time the country we were in was entirely unexplored, and never white man had set his foot there as far as we were aware, with, perhaps, the exception of Jimmy Morrill, who lived for seventeen years with the wild tribes in the neighbourhood of Mount Elliott. Well, the "boy" came into camp and said he had killed a wild "yarraman." "Gammon," we said. "Bel gammon," he replied; and we went and examined the animal. A fat, unbranded, two-year-old colt, brown in colour, shot through both shoulders with the regular smooth bore Tower carbine, which we used in those days. The flesh, both fresh and dried, proved excellent eating, with a smack of venison about it.

At length, when all provisions were nearly ended, we approached the sea and formed our camp on the shore, close to a fresh-water lagoon. Never, during all the years which have elapsed, have I forgotten the prophetic words spoken by our surveyor that evening, as we boiled the "billy" and "blew the cool tobacco cloud." "Boys," he said, "see that rocky range we have just come over? Some

day it will be dotted with blooming villas. Bobby Towns chose a fine site for his township when he viewed it from the sea." And has not this prophecy been long since fulfilled? Let old Townsvillians answer.

Up to this we had seen no signs of blacks in our immediate neighbourhood, but now our "boys" pointed out the thin smoke of their tiny camp fires above the fringe of mangroves, about a mile to the south of us and also on Magnetic Island.

Owing to the wear and tear of our gear, together with the heavy tropical showers which had drenched us on several occasions, we found on sampling our rations that they were more than three parts spoilt, and on the first appearance of the sun we emptied out the various rotten sacks and tried to dry their contents.

The commissariat very soon showing signs of giving out, members of our party dispersed in various directions to procure shell fish and wild fowl. I chose to visit a creek which debouched into the sea some three-quarters of a mile from camp, and taking hooks and lines and baiting with the entrails of a wild fowl, soon began to haul out bream and various

other sorts of fish. Though much engrossed with this occupation, I kept an eye lifting to the dense scrub of the further shore of the creek. I had hooked and landed a fat baby shark, of about eight pounds weight, when I heard a low cooe higher up and across the stream. Glancing up whilst pretending to examine my fish, I saw some blacks sink into the water under the bank. Guessing their intentions, I drew the shark over a sandy ridge which intervened between me and my stalkers, caught it up under one arm, and then made record time for "home"; but I had not gone twenty yards when I heard the Myalls yelling and plunging through the water after me.

When half-way to the camp, as I glanced over my shoulder I saw a leading black heave a spear, which came nowhere near me, but delayed him a few seconds. The wet sand was hard, I had nothing on but a shirt, and in those days could run a bit. Still, the situation was nasty, and the idea of being impaled from behind inspired me to drop the shark, wrench off my shirt and yell, as I knew some one was always left to guard the camp. I yelled first, and a couple of "boys" who were fishing and bathing in the lagoon saw

me, rushed for their carbines, and sprinted, not so much towards me as towards my pursuers, who were evidently nonplussed at seeing two naked blacks apparently coming from another quarter to join in the fun ; for the "boys" kept their carbines concealed as only these police can when stripped.

Presently a couple of shots rang out, which scattered the sand amongst the four or five wild blacks who had now come up. The reports were sufficient, and with one accord, finding themselves cut off, they plunged into the breakers. Soon I could see their heads bobbing about amongst the waves, and also perceived that as soon as it dawned upon them that smoke was followed by a bullet, they dived at the flash. I left the "boys" in the water, pumping lead and hurling derisive cries at them, neither of which seemed to reach their mark.

Now this escape proves luck and nothing else. If those "boys" had not been left at the camp I must have been speared. Besides, I was foolishly without arms of any sort on that occasion. In an hour or two my rescuers brought in the fish I had left behind, together with sundry weapons of the blacks, and I went

back with them to have a few matters explained. They showed me first where the leading black had stopped to hurl his spear, with which he had used a "woomera," or throwing stick. It was sticking in the sand in a direct line with my tracks. They also explained that it was only owing to the fact that the middle of the creek was deep water I got any start at all.

I did not sleep much that night, for the sun had blistered my legs from the shirt tails downwards.

But the black fellows had not done with us yet. A youngster belonging to our party, shortly after this, went out with his fowling piece, on to the plains a little way inland from the camp, when he descried a plain turkey and proceeded to stalk it. This young man came from southern towns and knew but little of bush lore. What happened he told us with breathless gasps as he came rushing into camp. From his horror-stricken face we saw that something unusual had occurred to him, which was confirmed when he blurted out, "I've killed a man!" "Black fellow?" queried a trooper, starting to his feet. "Yes," and the "boy" seemed satisfied, having evidently

thought that by the expression "man" it was possible our young sportsman had accidentally shot one of his own party.

"Well, go on," shouted our leader; and the youth, having taken a "nobbler" offered to him and finding his nerves somewhat restored thereby, proceeded:

"I was stalking the bird I had spotted and creeping through the blady grass on all fours, thinking what a fine feed we'd have, when I heard a rustle behind me just as I stopped to have another peep at the game, and turning my head quickly round, saw by the quivering of the herbage that some big beast—alligator I guessed—had also stopped; certainly something was stalking me.

"I was loaded with wire cartridge and fired at the spot. For a second all was still, and then, with wild yells, uprose I don't know how many black fellows, from all around it seemed to me; however, they disappeared in an instant, and having loaded up I approached the spot I had fired at, watching every step I took. There lay an old black fellow stone dead, with a spear and some clubs alongside him. The shot had taken him full in the head, and I believe the wire of the cartridge

was still sticking there ; however, I didn't stay to look, but got back here as quickly as I could. My word ! No more hunting for me !”

“ H'm, pity you didn't bag the turkey too,” remarked one of his audience.

On visiting the scene of this adventure, the “ boys ” reported that five black fellows had followed our mate and were just closing on him at the time he fired. After this we kept more together during our daily excursions.

A few miles from the coast we found the most magnificent specimen of a Leichhardt tree it has been my lot to come across, and an unexpected incident brought us to the foot of the monarch. It happened in this wise. A man had left some home-made tackle, which he specially prized, at a creek where he had been fishing. Thinking that the blacks had deserted the neighbourhood he also placed the fish he had caught in a hole at the same spot, intending to resume his angling next day, and so bring in all together. Next day, however, they had gone, fish and all, and the “ boys ” laughed when he angrily recounted his loss, but said they would find them. Stripping themselves, two of the troopers silently stole away—seemed to disappear into the

ground, so quickly were they out of sight. Many hours passed and they as suddenly and quietly stood by the camp fire once more. One of them carried a dilly bag, and out of this he not only produced our friend's gear and spoils, but also other sorts of small white fish.

Their story was soon told. They had taken up the tracks of the Myalls from the creek right into their camp, which was formed by a small waterhole. In this pool were two or three natives using a scoop net. A dingo belonging to the tribe gave the first alarm by rushing into camp in a terrified state, thus causing bucks and jins to bolt in all directions, with such things as they could pick up. The three blacks ran to the big Leichhardt tree and were quickly out of sight amongst the topmost branches, the great leaves of which formed a dense cover.

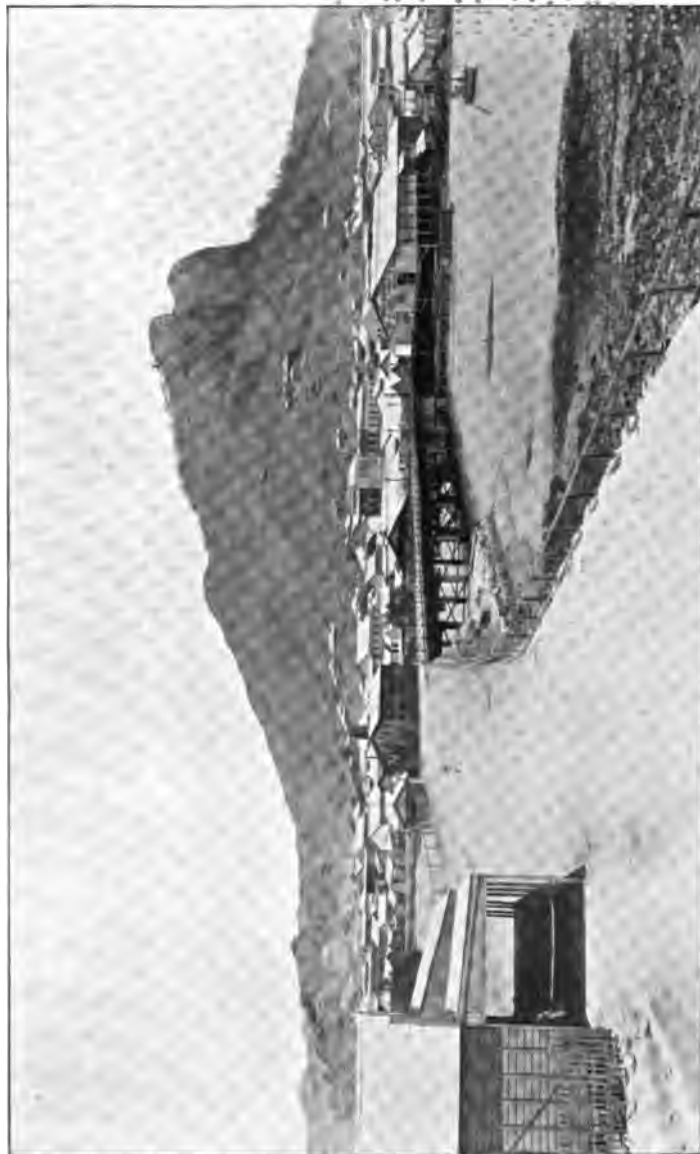
But the "boys" were not to be denied, and after ordering them down "in the Queen's name" in various dialects and getting no response, fired a shot to prove that they were armed. Still all was quiet, but as one of them had been seen to carry a dilly bag up with him, it was determined to seize this ; so

armed with tomahawks only, the troopers were as quickly in the tree-tops as the first comers. But before they actually touched them, the native basket was seen hurtling through the air, disgorging its contents as it fell; the owners, meanwhile, making no other sign to show that they were discovered, but lying flat along the limbs like so many guanos. It took many months for the wild native to discover that his half-civilised brother was his equal in all bush lore and could climb trees as well as he by cutting notches in the stem with his tomahawk.

Besides our friend's fishing-tackle, the bag contained a curious specimen of a native-made line and hook, which I have by me now. The cord was formed from one of the fibrous plants used for the purpose, and was as well laid as any sea line of home manufacture, whilst the hook was cut out of a tortoise shell, with a very fine line attached to the shank to tie the bait on with. There was also a lump of gum on the main line to sink it with.

Ours was a grand wild life in that glorious climate, tempered as the heat was by the seabreeze. Not the least pleasant were the excursions we made to supply the commissariat,

chiefly along the coast, collecting rock-oysters, turtle eggs, or spearing hammer-headed sharks and stingarees, until the survey was complete and we returned to head-quarters on the Don River, Port Denison. It gives rise to curious and interesting thoughts when I think of those days and try to conjecture what Townsville looks like now, with its bishop and churches, plantations, villas, and railway, its wharves and steamer traffic.



TOWNSVILLE (PRESENT DAY).

[To face p. 112.

TO VIRU
ALBO TUAO

CHAPTER IX

TURN SOUTHWARD

Turn About for Port Denison—Murdered Shepherd—Burial in the Bush—The Pursuit—Bad Basaltic Range—View the Blacks' Camp—Assailed with Boomerangs—Fight with the Murderers—Sub-aquatic Telegraphy—The Jins—Love Making and Matrimony—Notes concerning Black Fellows' Customs

WE returned to Port Denison by a different way from that by which we had come, so as to avoid a certain rocky range, and by so doing came suddenly upon a new outside station, lying far to the west of our old track. It was situated on an ana-branch of the Burdekin. Our first intimation of the vicinity of a white man was an exclamation from one of the "boys." "White fellow sit down, marmy." ("White men are there, master"). At the same time he pointed to a small column of smoke. Doubtless he had noticed other signs; anyhow, the sequel proved he was right, for we soon rode up to a large, newly-

erected hut and found the inmates, consisting of two brothers, who owned the place, and their "generally useful" man, engaged in barricading doors and windows. They seemed intensely relieved to find that their visitors consisted of Native Police, and after the first congratulations were over, remarked that they had been expecting us, as they had sent some two days before this to head-quarters for assistance.

It was an old story—a repetition of many similar troubles before and since in the history of the Colonies. Shepherd speared, sheep clubbed. It appeared that they were running their sheep on the plains a short distance to the westward, and one evening, shortly before we arrived, their black boy, who had been helping with the flock, ran into the hut crying that the shepherd had been speared and many sheep killed, but that he had escaped owing to the Myalls being so taken up with their murderous work. The brothers had then gone out, but had failed to find the shepherd, having left the black boy behind to help guard the station. They had ample evidence, however, to prove that many sheep had been killed, whilst they picked up a few survivors,

which they found in small lots huddled together. The main flock was not brought in till several days later. So here was the situation—no shepherd, no sheep to speak of, and every reason to suppose the station would be attacked. It was a lucky chance that brought us to the aid of these young squatters, as they allowed, after hearing that we were on our way *to* the barracks.

After spelling the horses we saddled up and proceeded to the scene of the tragedy, guided by the black boy. The troopers soon took up the tracks of the white man and those of his pursuers. The trail led towards a ridge of rocks which bordered one side of the plain, and in these rocks we found the mutilated remains of the shepherd, who had been both speared and clubbed. Then his body had been cut open for the purpose of extracting the kidney fat ; this is much prized by the natives for anointing their own bodies with.

Before finding the shepherd's body we had come across the remains of his little bark shed, which had been fired by the blacks ; his cooking gear and clothes had all been carried off. This was galling enough, but when we saw the body lying stark amongst the boulders the

white men felt bad, whilst as for the "boys" they said not a word, but their eyes flashed vengeance, and they were for going off at a gallop without looking at us, had not a word of command stopped them. "Where are these devils, and how many?" was asked, in fierce and subdued voice. And the "boys" replied "That fellow yan that fellow way," pointing with their chins, as is their habit, to a distant range, and on their fingers they showed us that at least fifteen bucks were in the mob, accompanied by many jins.

Very sulkily the troopers got off their horses when ordered to help in burying the remains, and yet one could not bury, but could only hide, by means of heavy slabs of rock, which needed many hands to place them in position, and when at last our old chief placed one erect stone on the top of all, and pondered a minute, we wondered as to what would be the next order, but we were not kept long waiting. "Boys," he said, in a husky tone, "I don't know any service, but let me speak you a verse from some grand words composed by a mate of mine on the death of Leichhardt."

Whilst writing I vividly picture the scene once again, as the old man drew himself up

into a stern military attitude, his grey hairs floating in the wind; the "boys" also standing at attention, wondering what it was all about. Then, with partly uplifted hand, he spoke :

What though no reverend man be near,
No solemn anthem with its breath,
No holy walls invest his bier
With all the hallowed pomp of death;
Yet humble minds shall find the grace
Devoutly bowed upon the sod,
That calls a blessing round the place,
And consecrates the soil to God.

The simple ceremony concluded, we had to despatch a man back to the station for more rations, meanwhile we camped at a small waterhole in the vicinity. We were well aware, and the "boys" still more so, that we had practically got the murderers, for one might as well doubt a South American bloodhound after a runaway slave in the old days as these Native Police, when once on the trail; yet it was a relief to us all when the messenger returned with beef and flour, for the troopers were more than once on the point of breaking away, having held their horses in readiness all the time; for what care these "boys" for rations on such an occasion—turn

them loose in the bush, and they will forage for themselves every whit as well as the wild man of the woods.

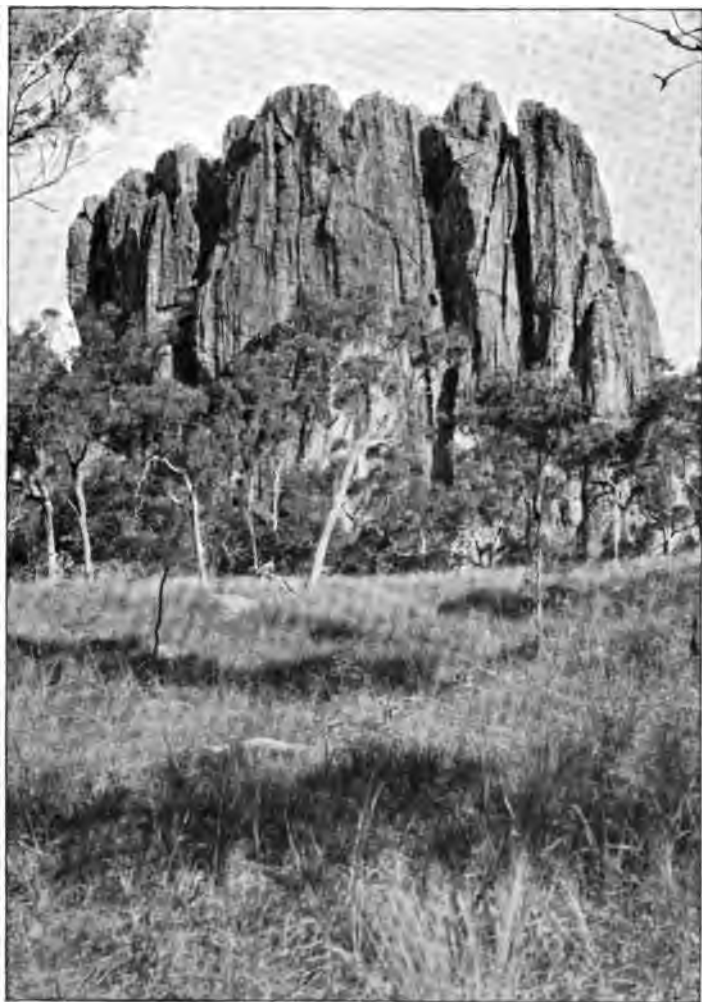
It took us many hours before we arrived at the foot of the range, and then we found that it was impracticable for horses, owing to rocks of every size and shape piled in confusion one on top of the other ; nor was there any sort of way for four-footed beasts across this basaltic upheaval.

No matter ; we hobbled out the horses, and sent the " boys " to reconnoitre.

Presently a couple of them returned, stripped as usual, and told us that they had left the others to watch the black fellows' camp, which was on a lagoon and just over the range.

What a scramble that was ! Yet the troopers, with their naked feet, glided about the rocks like lizards, and whilst we were still following them they seemed to disappear. After three hours of this toil we were suddenly assailed with a shower of boomerangs, but we had got into the timber now and no one was hit. I saw several of these weapons smashed into splinters on the rocks, whilst some passed on their course and fell harmlessly behind us, not returning to their owners, as I have heard

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



CATHEDRAL ROCK, CHILLAGOE, DISTRICT OF CAIRNS, A THOUSAND MILES N.W. OF
BRISBANE. [To face p. 118.]

TO VIBU ALBOSILAO

.

.

it stated at home. In trick-throwing this feat is often accomplished, but not with a fighting boomerang. Presently three or four shots rang out from the blady grass at our very feet, and our men, despising alike boomerangs and spears, rushed forward.

Amongst other incidents I saw a black hurl a nullah-nullah at a trooper named Brennan, at close quarters ; the latter dodged it, picked it up, and knocked the black over spinning. This black was clad in one of the shirts of the murdered shepherd ; subsequently we found others wearing portions of his garments. Soon these latter were bolting in every direction and the "boys" after them. Some of them rushed into the lagoon and disappeared, only to come up with their nostrils under a water-lily. These I could not see at all, but the "boys" pointed them out. Meantime the jins were viewing the fray from a distance.

The orders in those days were to command blacks who had committed crime to "surrender in the Queen's name!" One might as well ask them to shake hands. I once saw a very powerful white man attempt to secure an unarmed black fellow. He could not hold him, no matter where he gripped him ; the black

slipped out of his clutches like an eel and very soon cleared.

Just before the end of this fight—when, in fact, it seemed to be all over—I saw two blacks rushing back over the boulders; the foremost one suddenly sprang round and threw his shield in the face of the other, who closed with him, when, to my amazement, I recognised this latter as one of the troopers. Being stripped, they were as like as two peas. When we came right into camp we found that the “boys” had rounded up several jins, whom they were questioning concerning the late raid, but to no purpose, as never a dialect of any one of the “boys” would fit in with that of this tribe.

In most stories of the past and present one looks for a hero and heroine—a bit of love-making, in fact—but in this simple and perfectly true account of adventure I have nothing of the sort to chronicle, and yet can write of match-making and nuptials in connection with it.

The courting, it is true, was of the briefest, and heroic in its treatment. Not only were settlements, trousseaux, and other trifles dispensed with, but ceremonies were waived, or, rather, were of the most sketchy character.

A nod took the place of "yes," and yet the dusky couples lived happy ever after, as I had proof. But I must go back to explain what follows.

For this Townsville trip we had left married troopers at the head camp and taken mostly single men with us to keep them out of mischief, as they sometimes meddled in domestic matters, and this caused severe quarrels. It is far better, if one wants a peaceful camp, to have all "boys" married. Should the wives cause quarrels amongst themselves or husbands, a tap on the head from their lord and master's waddy soon settles the dispute.

Now the blacks had been dispersed; all had disappeared, excepting two or three who had dived into the lagoon. When I asked about these latter the "boys" said that they had not troubled about them, and that they were most likely holding a "yabber" together under water! This was too much, and evoked the word "gammon" from me. "Bel Gammon," meaning no gammon, was the universal reply; and then they assured me that any two blacks could communicate whilst completely immersed in still water; each tapping two stones together, a sort of sub-aquatic morse code I understood

them to mean, and that if I did not believe it they would prove it to me, any day or night. It appeared that they could ask questions and receive answers whilst submerged, and at distances of thirty yards and more apart from each other. I never had an opportunity to prove this, but was subsequently assured of the fact by those who had tried it.

No sign being now left of the murderers of the poor shepherd we turned to the group of jins, some twelve or fifteen, who had remained at the scene of combat, apparently indifferent as to the result, for we found them seated amongst the "boys," each party endeavouring to express his or her feelings by pantomime, for none of this tribe seemed to understand any one of the trooper's dialects. The varied attempts at conversation caused some merriment, in which the women participated, and when one of the "boys" exactly imitated the lugubrious cawings of an old crow which was perched overhead, the whole party laughed outright, so wonderful are the aborigines of Australia in the art of mimicry.

Judging by this levity of conduct that the family ties existing between the wild jins and

the departed blacks had been of the most transient nature, also that these women seemed much to appreciate the good, solid food, consisting of beef and damper, offered them by the "boys," it struck those in authority that an opportunity now presented itself, not to be lightly thrown away; and the delicate subject of matrimony was there and then submitted to the bachelor members of our force and very favourably received by them.

The jins also showed no fear when they guessed the situation, which they very soon did with a woman's wit. They doubtless looked for a little courting, but a good meal and quantities of sugar in their tea put them into a good humour; the diet apparently pleasing them better than their usual fare of wild yams, snake, kangaroo rats, and such mean food which they had had to procure for their men at the certain risk of having their heads or ribs broken if they failed to bring in enough. And when, after their meal, they understood by pantomime that they were to come away with the "boys," complete satisfaction was apparent in their faces, possibly also there was a sense of relief, for up to that period they might have thought that they were

going to be killed and eaten!¹ So they were conducted to a log and made to sit down. Then each "groom" in rotation, according to his rank or merits, made his choice, nor were they long about it. The corporal first walked up to a jin, who certainly was one of the best-looking ones I had seen up to that period, with "Mine take it this curly hair fellow."

In five minutes each had chosen his spouse and the ceremony was complete.

There was no further delay, for the brides did not trouble about "going away dress"; we found them a shirt apiece instead. The only thing that staggered them was having to sit on horseback behind their respective husbands, but by clutching hold for better or worse they jogged along very fairly well, only we had to remove the cruppers, as these galled their legs. Before we left the spot we picked up several boomerangs, some of which I have by me still.

We arrived at the barracks with our large

¹ I never heard of cannibalism amongst the tribes. The Queensland aborigines are not cannibals in the usual sense of the term. My authority was Morrill, who lived for seventeen years with the wild tribes. I quote him in *Blacks and Bush-rangers*, p. 96, thus: "Sometimes they eat human flesh, but only a friend killed in battle or by accident; *never* their enemies."

wedding party without further adventure, and gave them a feast, which was wound up at night with a grand corroboree.

I saw them when I next visited the district. The girls had grown stouter, and were cheery and chatty, having learnt dialects, as well as "Pidgin English." Upon putting the question to them, "Would you like to go back to your old life?" they answered with a series of groans—"Bel; here budgery; there cabon dig, cabon waddy," which meant that here in barracks all was good, but there in the wild bush was hard work and many blows.

A fact strikes me which I may as well relate here.

It has been said by some that *all* human beings when at the last, *in extremis*, lift up their eyes to Heaven.

This may be true generally, but from my own observation I do not think that the rule applies to the Australian black.

To give one special and forcible instance. Near Rockhampton a black fellow had committed a diabolical outrage on a white woman, from the effects of which she died. The man was sentenced to be hanged, and I was present at the execution. I remember that all the

jail birds were turned into the yard to witness the ceremony. Standing, as I was, immediately in front of the gallows, I had ample opportunity of judging in what manner the murderer comported himself.

Up to the very last moment that he had the use of his eyes he scanned the forests, the valleys and waters, but never for one instant turned his eyes Heavenwards. I subsequently refer again to this execution.

CHAPTER X

SPRING CREEK BARRACKS

On entering the Force—I join Head-quarters—"Timeringle"—
The Bush Shanty—Free Drinks—The "King"—Barcoo
Rot—Spring Creek Barracks—Duties—My First Round—
The Loaded Log—Supplying the Larder—Scenery of the
Nogoa—Tracking Blacks—Stockman up a Tree—Loss of
his Library—Delicacies—Fever and Ague—"Lucy"—A
New Sensation

I AM reminded whilst penning these lines that I have not stated anything with regard to examinations or preparatory training before applying for a post in the Q.N.P. It certainly never entered my head to do so, because nothing of the sort, as far as examinations were concerned, was required, and as for training, as long as a man bore a good record, could ride and understand the use of firearms, he had as good a chance of entering the force as any one, and he would be a poor "new chum" indeed who did not possess these qualifications. As for drill, beyond a few simple forms, or any sort of red tape, I never

saw it, though I stayed at various barracks for longer or shorter periods. It would have been of no use. The true drill belonged to the "boys," and, in fact, to all blacks who from the time that they can walk are naturally drilled by members of their tribe to track, indulge in mimic warfare, and, above all, to scout so as to get in first spear, waddy, or boomerang. Piccaninnies swim as a puppy would—directly they can use their limbs.

A new hand is welcome to his senior officer in the police if he will confine his attentions at first to looking after camping arrangements and all the petty details which make for comfort.

Should the horses develop sore backs, a very common source of trouble, he can do something to ameliorate this, especially by learning how to channel out a saddle and so keep it off the wounded parts. He can go with one of the "boys" when a horse has strayed and thus learn something of tracking, and then as he gains knowledge of routine he will be found useful in the more important duties, and prove a welcome aid, even though he may not have actually joined officially.

As an amateur, I enjoyed patrolling both before and after I had enlisted. There was

a freedom from restraint, go-as-you-please sort of feeling connected with the life which was specially fascinating. At the same time if you acted in any way contrary to the simple rules, your senior officer would doubtless dispense with your services.

I know that the officer whom I accompanied on this patrol to the site of Townsville was good enough to back my application to enter the force, for I was with him and his "boys" again in other districts long after I had officially quitted it.

As I before remarked, so fascinating did I find this free and independent life, seasoned as it was with a spice of danger, that shortly after the little trip to Townsville I applied for, and was appointed to the force, through the kind instrumentality of Sir Robert, then Mr. Herbert, as Acting Sub-Inspector, at £9 a month and rations. My orders were to proceed to headquarters at Rockhampton and report myself. I was there given a horse named "Timeringle," and told to proceed to Spring Creek Barracks, Comet and Nogoa district. There was no accommodation on the road then, and I did many foolish things—lost my way once and did not recover the badly blazed track for many hours.

One night my horse disappeared. I had so buried myself in the sandy bed of a creek to try and keep warm, for I did not care about lighting a fire at that spot, that I could not hear the jingle of the mare's hobbles ; however, I recovered her after a long search with one hobble missing, and had the luck at the same time to shoot a plain turkey with my revolver, stalking the bird under cover of Timeringle, whom I then hobbled more securely with a stirrup leather, and spent a happy time cooking, eating some of my game, and enjoying a long sleep. One shanty I passed on the road, from which the sounds of great revelry proceeded, and I thought to pass it by, but was soon perceived and rushed by a mob of shepherds, diggers, and other jovial spirits, who were "knocking down their cheques" at the probably unlicensed weather-board erection. One big, hairy individual seized my bridle, and with much adornment of language asked me if "his b——y cheque warn't as good as mine," to which I responded that it would be accepted at the Union Bank long before my paper.

"Then I'm beggared, if I don't shout." I signified I was not thirsty. Upon making this

appalling statement I was dragged off my mare, which was sent into the bush with a spank on her stern, and carried into the bar, I was going to say, yet every one was a barman. The liquor, consisting chiefly of champagne, besides three star brandy and gin, stood on old packing cases. I was introduced to various members in a very "politeful" manner after I had given my name

"This," said the man of cheques, as he dragged a cock-eyed paddy from under a bench, "is my pore b——y cousin; 'e's bin king of one of these 'ere wool sheds, but, pore devil, 'e's got the 'Barcoo rot.'"

The "king" was in a state of tears as he supported himself in a fairly graceful attitude cocked up against the wall. "Young 'un," he hiccupped, as he tried to bring his eyes to bear, "I'll sit out this blank dance, but if any one 'ere says I can't shear a sheep in——" At this point he collapsed. The calculation was too much for him as to how soon he could deprive a sheep of its wool, and the "king" rolled back under his bench. My difficulty was how to beat a graceful retreat, with so many huge fists holding bottles and glasses under my nose and insisting with good-humoured threats

that I should drink various toasts and "further cement those kindly feelings." By a happy thought I fought my way till I stood over the drunken "king," and with glass in hand told them how grieved I was to see a noble shearer down with "Barcoo rot," but that if they would bring up my horse they would find in the swag a parcel of Holloway's pills and ointment.

I may mention that "Barcoo rot" is well known in many parts of Queensland—the blood is disorganised from want of vegetables and the result consists in sores breaking out on the hands; these refuse to heal, but Holloway's ointment is most cleansing, and, properly used, together with other remedies, will usually cure them. I had hit the proper note. Timeringle, who was peacefully grazing, was brought up and the packet handed to the "king's" cousin. These too jovial spirits would not allow me to "shout"; on the other hand, they put a tin of beef and a bottle of their best in my swag. I put a note (£1) amongst their bottles and bid them "so long." As they helped me to mount, one of the clearer-eyed ones read N.M.P. on the saddle cloth.

“Why, do you come from the blank police?” he said, in a changed tone.

“Yes! But you don’t think I’m going to let police or any one else know where or how I’ve been so well treated, do you?” was my reply, at which they all waved bottles and glasses and cheered me on my journey.

I arrived in due course at the barracks, and found that my senior officer, the only one besides myself, was a pleasant Crimean veteran, under whom it was ever after a pleasure to serve. The “boys” consisted of some sixteen or so in number; about half of these were married. We had twenty-five to thirty horses, which it was my duty to call over every morning, when they were driven into the paddock from the bush. We also possessed a few sheep and plenty of rations, whilst a creek near by provided us with a delicious eating fish, which I never came across in any other part of the country. It resembled a lamprey or ophidium. They did not seem to take any bait, but the “boys” caught them with hand-nets. My orders were written by my senior on official paper and contained, amongst others, the following instructions:

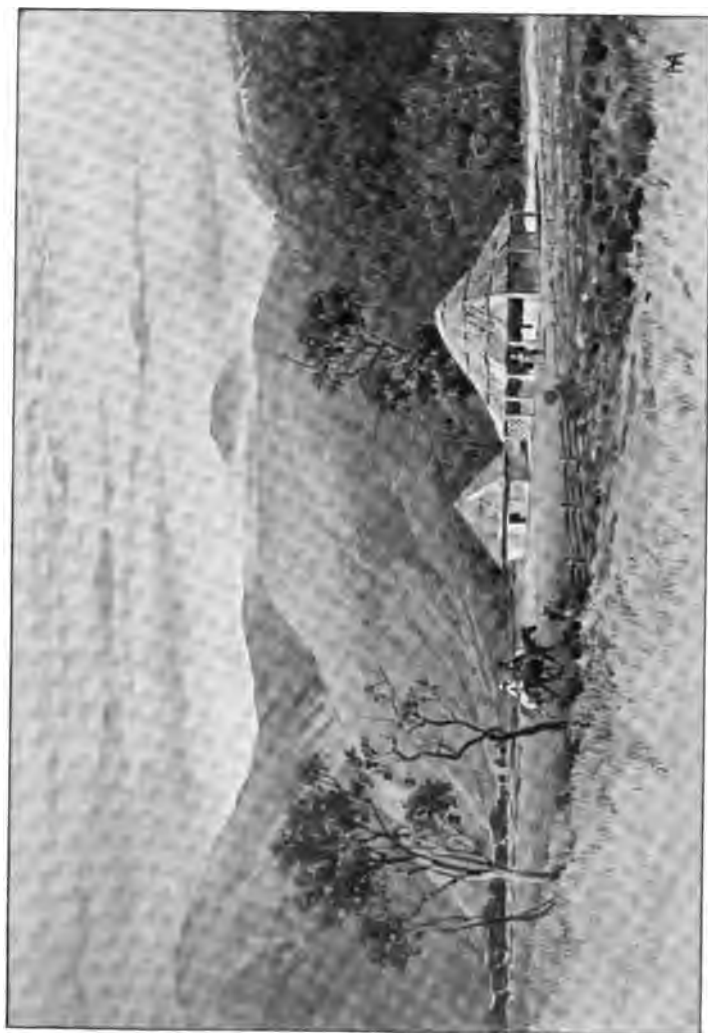
“You will patrol the stations mentioned

in the margin, rendering assistance to the squatters in the event of their calling on you for protection from the aborigines. Keep a full and daily journal of your doings, etc."

And how truly fascinating were these trips, extending as they sometimes did for six or eight weeks together, in their freedom from all restraint, in searchings often into new country, with a handful of trusty "boys."

Some say that if you look back at pleasant times in the years long gone by, to-day, these incidents, these adventures, wear an even more rosy hue, because you forget or pass over all that was unpleasant. To the writer's ideas such is not the case, but it would be only padding to tell of shortness of water, dismal nights of rain, bull-dog ants, and curses of insects generally, the lasting poison of tropical stinging trees, and the hundred and one ills that flesh is heir to in the Australian bush. The B.P. are, I am told, getting tired of narratives of exploration. An acquaintance said to me lately; "Thank goodness, a book has appeared—*The Last of the Explorers*." As I am not of his way of thinking, I read it at once and with the greatest interest. It is true that those grand old pioneers to whom we

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



SPRING CREEK BARRACKS IN THE 'SIXTIES.

[To face p. 134.

TO VINU
AIRBORNE

owe so much are not remembered, except by the few. Now I shall procure *The Romance of Australian Explorers*, by Scott, and look forward much to reading it. What thrilling and true accounts do we not find in the history detailing the gigantic efforts of those men who first opened up Australia. Take one alone out of many—to wit, Eyre's frightful and lonely march along the great Australian Bight. But read his own account of it.

After this bit of moralising, I return to the Comet and Nogoia, for it was upon these rivers and their watersheds that my work was chiefly cut out.

My first patrol consisted of five boys, myself, and eight or ten horses, the spare ones to carry a tent and rations. At one of the out-lying stations, before we entered into the unknown, a humorous incident of the bush took place. The rain-water tank outside one of the humpies had been filled with rum; many thirsty souls had partaken of this, when it occurred to a spirited minority to play a little practical joke. So a hollow log was filled with gunpowder, horses were brought up, and amidst tearful farewells some half-dozen riders, fresh—very fresh—from the butt, prepared to

mount. At a given moment the log was "touched off," and, amidst a tempest of whirling arms and legs, horses were galloping for dear life into the bush. No real harm was done, as the charge was too weak to do more than split the heavy log, and the only blood that was spilt was in the subsequent fight which closed the proceedings.

To show how the troopers used to pride themselves on their *amour propre* and position under their officers, I was talking to a "boy" in a hut that evening, when a hand on the station put his head into the window with the remark :

"I thought I smelt a b—— black."

Before I could realise what had happened, there was a rush, the trooper seemed to take a header through the open window and was pursuing the insulter of his skin, who only saved his own by gaining the door of the main building and bolting it behind him. I need hardly remark that all officers treated their "boys" with as much civility as if these latter had been the home-bred Tommy Atkins.

Though the country of the Nogoia lacked the more tropical beauty of the higher latitudes, with their wealth of palm trees, dense scrubs

crowded with flame, or "umbrella" trees, or smothered with gigantic creepers bearing the huge but uneatable beans of which we made match-boxes, yet it had a beauty of its own. During the winter months no roaring flood disturbed its river bed, but deep and silent pools here and there reflected the evergreen trees and shrubs which lined its banks, affording shelter to the scrub turkeys and malley hens, whilst fish and wild fowl abounded in the quiet waterholes. At one of these pools we found a clearing far away from any cover and there we camped. My tent was erected, a fire made under an old log, and whilst the "billy" was boiling the boys dispersed for ducks and fish, which were soon brought in and dressed for the evening meal, as we wished to keep our salt beef as long as possible.

The day's proceedings always commenced with saluting—that is to say, as soon as the officer crawled out of his tent to have a look round, preparatory to taking a "bogie," *i.e.*, swim in the creek or waterhole, every trooper, whether in his shirt or in nature's attire only, sprang to his feet and saluted, then resumed his previous occupation of cooking his meal

or cleaning his carbine. I may remark that these muzzle-loading smooth-bore weapons threw shot fairly well, and, used in this sense by the troopers, proved very effective against wild fowl and scrub game, the latter of which required much canny stalking.

On this particular morning a couple of "boys" had gone out to get in the horses when a black boy rode up to say that he had been sent from a station, which, by the way, was not down in our programme, to beg us to look for a missing man. Upon cross-examining this black boy we found that he knew little about the matter, as he did not belong to the particular station in question, but the owner had told him to follow our tracks, find our camp, and then report that many bullocks had been speared, and one of his men, too, he thought, must have suffered the same fate. The boy's narrative seemed loose and disjointed, but it is difficult to get accurate information from such as these. However, the "boys" were keen to go, and so I decided to learn the truth about the matter. Horses were at once mustered, and we mounted and followed our guide.

After proceeding for many hours through

swamps and scrubs, over plains and rocky ground, we came to thickly timbered ridges, when the quick eye of Charlio caught the signs. "Plenty black fellow yan like it this," he gruffly remarked, as he pointed to a neighbouring range of hills. The sight of these natives of Australia is something astonishing, and worthy of Cooper's Indians at their best. It was hard, dry ground at the spot where he discovered the tracks; I got off my horse, and yet could see nothing, excepting perhaps where a little soil had been displaced, which to my eye might have been caused by a bird or a mouse, and yet the tracker read out that a mob of blacks had passed that way, and the whole troop followed these signs at a gallop. I made out from the black boy during our ride, that in their opinion the reason that the stockman was speared, was because he had not been in for some rations which he had intended to call for.

On reaching the man's hut, we found everything in disorder, and, as it proved, the blacks had raided most of his things, but had done no further mischief, for we ran the man himself to ground, or rather up a tree, where we found him very thirsty and frightened, but with a

whole skin. They evidently had no intention of hurting him, for they could have followed him up as we did if they had liked.

It appeared that he had seen them coming up quite boldly whilst he was engaged in cooking his dinner, so he put a piece of damper in his pocket and slipped away unperceived, as he said, but we knew he was in error when he made this latter statement. He specially bewailed the loss of his cooking utensils and the "billy" in which he boiled his tea; and then there were his prized yellow-backed novels! We told him to hold his tongue and thank his stars that he was alive; also that he might come along with us and claim his own if we found the camp that night, which we did.

There were only a few old jins in it, as the bucks had not returned from hunting. These women did not appear at all frightened, neither assisted nor disturbed us whilst we searched about for the man's things. We found some of his cooking utensils; but, alas for the owner! the shilling shockers were rent in pieces; possibly because the Myalls did not appreciate such literature. No signs of any cattle having been speared, we left the stealers

of literature in peace, merely taking away a few weapons, which we found near the gunyahs, to show there was no ill-feeling. We camped that night about a mile from the natives, and next day assisted stockman and black boy to get in the cattle ; three or four of them had strayed, but we could not delay any longer, so we sent back to report at the owner's station.

One night, before reaching barracks, the "boys" brought me a couple of delicacies, as doubtless they considered them. One was a carpet snake, the other a small porcupine. The snake had been roasted in its coils, looked like a gigantic eel, and smelt delicious ; but it had no more flavour than so much blotting paper, and I had nothing like shrimp or Harvey sauce to season it with. The porcupine was a little better and had a suspicion of pig about it. It was the first and last I ever saw in the country—in fact, I never knew they were there. The only bush game, besides birds, that I cared about was bandicoot.

Ducks of many varieties, when away from civilisation, were perfectly tame ; under these conditions there was but little sport in killing them, and we only knocked over a few now and then for the pot.

Finding the district pretty quiet during this patrol, we returned to barracks, where I was laid up with a sharp attack of fever and ague, but, thanks to the attention of those troopers' wives who waited upon us, my life during the days I was ill was not such a misery as it might otherwise have been.

Lucy in particular—how well a man remembers when he has been well nursed, especially as it so happened at this period, when he was the only white man about the place, and down with that horrible sickness—Lucy knew as well as I did that the shakes would come on at two o'clock every alternate day, and last till sundown. Now, without saying a word, she made up a roaring fire, covered me with blankets, skins, waterproofs, sat me up in front of the blaze, and, whilst my teeth were going like castanets, plied me with hot tea or cooling drinks—for which was correct I never knew. Then, when the fever, accompanied by light-headedness, arrived up to time at night, she would sit by me till dawn and tend me like a black angel. I found much kind feeling and even affection in the hearts of both troopers and their wives during my experience of them in the force, though I allow

that these are not the prevailing qualities of the natives generally. Life in barracks was a bit monotonous. One of my few occupations consisted in collecting birds and animals, which I brought in, skinned, and preserved. In after years and in another part of the Colony I made a fair collection, especially of tropical birds.

There was one deep stream, within a few miles of the barracks, which was my favourite haunt. As far as I knew, this river never dried up ; it was shut in by dense and almost impenetrable scrub which lined its banks. On a certain day I had ridden to the place with one of the "boys," for I usually took a native with me owing to the extraordinary powers they possess in both seeing and hearing. On this occasion we had been cutting and fighting our way through the scrub till we emerged on the river bank, and then sat down to smoke and get cool.

This is one of the best ways of collecting objects of natural history in the bush ; only sit perfectly quiet, and after a time birds and animals betray their presence by their movements and various notes. I secured some gaudy scrub doves at this spot, which were

feeding on wild figs, also a dragoon bird, and then bethought me of a bathe. I only mention this fact because it discovered to me a new sensation in the water. In the following way :

The stream ran some four feet deep over a bed of shingle and small boulders. The water was as clear as crystal and warm as new milk. This depth continued for a hundred yards past the spot where we had camped for our smoke. I went in at the top of the run, and, sinking down in a sitting position to examine some bright-looking pebbles, found myself gently and swiftly carried along the bed of the brook. It was grand—flying could not be more pleasant, moreover, that might require exertion, whereas in this smooth under-water excursion it was not necessary to raise a finger, for the very slightest movement sufficed to fend one off any obstacle. The black bream, which we often used to catch with bait, scarcely disturbed themselves as I glided silently and smoothly by them and let the stream take me whither it would. If it spun me round I viewed fresh scenery, or if it carried me into a backwater a slight push set me into the current again ; another, and I was up to the

surface once more to take in another stock of air fuel. The bather must all this time remain in a squatting position. This is really the most pleasurable sensation that I know of in connection with a water pastime, provided that the stream is a warm one.

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT PIONEER

**The Wills's Massacre—Blake the Invincible—Westall's Murder—
Tracking the Fiends—Nemesis—The Missing Overseer and
his Master—Following the Trail—"Nicky Nicky's" Work—
Basaltic Barrier—Note on Scouting**

MORE than one murder of a terrible nature occurred during my stay in this district, but the scene of these outrages by the blacks was beyond the margin of the country which I had orders to patrol, and was dealt with by other detachments of the N.P.

Cullinaringo, the scene of the famous and ghastly Wills's massacre was a station I had more than once visited; this wholesale butchery had taken place before my time. Suffice it to say here that the good and kind-hearted old squatter had, on taking up the country, announced his intention of making friends with the blacks and allowing them into the station by the score. All went well for a time, but when these blacks had thoroughly

learnt the ways and habits of the white man, at a given signal they fell upon the whites in the day-time during their hours of rest, and killed with nullah-nullahs and axes some nineteen out of twenty-four.

Now I will mention a couple of bad events which took place during my sojourn in the Nogoa district, related to me by the one who was chiefly concerned in seeking the bodies of the murdered whites and punishing those who had committed the atrocious deeds.

At a certain station named Salvia Downs, in the Boree country, lived a squatter named Blake, an individual of much "black-fellow" experience, kind-hearted, but withal possessing a most determined way in his dealings with roughs of any colour. He allowed a district tribe to camp near his station under certain conditions. His station hands comprised two white working men and three blacks; these latter, of course, being natives of another part of Queensland. One of these three had, years previous to this, served as a trooper in the N.P., his name was "Nicky Nicky."

Some few miles from Salvia Downs a new arrival had taken up a bit of country; his name was Westall. He was by no means a new

chum, having been squatting in more civilised districts previously. This man erected a log hut, together with the usual yards and buildings ; from the first he had discarded Blake's advice with regard to his management of the blacks, saying that he perfectly well understood the native character, and that if he treated them kindly, so would they look after his cattle and interests generally, and that he should always allow them in and about the station. It appeared that Westall occasionally visited Salvia Downs, and that it was his habit to proceed there alone, and to camp half-way at a certain waterhole. One day Westall's overseer rode up at a tearing gallop to Blake's station, and informed him that Westall had been absent for three days, that the blacks had left the place, and that they had no one to put on the missing man's tracks. Blake at once grasped the situation, called up two of his trackers, and all three made for the waterhole.

Arriving there, the first thing they found was a broken bridle lying on the ground, then a saddle. The signs around were read thus : Something frightened the horse, who broke his bridle while Westall was trying to

saddle him. Taking up the tracks of Westall and his horse, they found that these had been followed up by five black fellows. The horse had then bolted, when the blacks had closed on Westall, who had stood and offered them tobacco—this was proved by pieces of Barrett's twist lying on the ground—which had been discarded, the blacks probably not knowing the use for it.

A few yards farther on the naked body of Westall was found, horribly mutilated in an indescribable manner, and shockingly distorted by the action of the sun. He had been struck down from behind by a tomahawk. Blake was well provided with rations, his three horses were fresh, so, after covering up the body, he proceeded as quickly as possible on the tracks of the five murderers, who by this time had had many hours' start. They had hurried off in a westerly direction, presumably to join their tribe. At first it was slow work, as the trail was faint.

After camping one night on the tracks it was found next day that the spoor led over some low-lying flats, rendering it easier to read, and horses were put into a canter, a sharper look-out being kept, as tracks were fresher, and it was evident that the pursued were

not travelling direct, but were delaying to procure food. This was proved some hours later, when a "boy" scouting ahead suddenly returned to say "that fellow look out sugar bag," and listening, the faint tap, tap of a tomahawk could be heard, as it ate its way into the spout of a gun tree, which contained the wild bees' nest.

Then, as they crawled forward, a scene presented itself to the pursuers which made their blood boil, for the buck who was cutting out the honey was arrayed in Westall's shirt, which flapped out lazily in the light air as the wearer balanced himself on his big toe in the topmost nick he had cut in the tree, whilst his four fellow-murderers were each and all bedecked in some of their victim's remaining garments during their work, being engaged in grubbing for yams and other roots on the plain near by. Before nightfall, however, they had lost all further interest in the gentle art of sustaining life. Westall's clothes were taken back and placed, with his body, in as decent a grave as circumstances would permit.

Blake eventually returned to his own station, only to find that the day previous to his return a white man had come in to say that

at a station forty miles off, in a totally different direction to Westall's, the owner and his overseer had been murdered, the house looted and cattle driven off. This messenger had begged Blake's overseer to lend him a tracker, which he did, sending "Nicky Nicky" off with him, much to Blake's disgust, as the erstwhile police "boy" was one whom he had never trusted. Then Blake sent a message to the nearest police barracks, but as the distance forbade the troopers appearing for some time, he only rested for a few hours, and then started for the scene of this latest massacre with fresh horses and a tracker.

From what I heard from others it was only the iron will and determination of the owner of Salvia Downs and the fact of his making his presence felt directly a murder had been committed that saved this portion of the country to the white man. Taking a bee line, and having negotiated the forty miles of rock and bog as only bushmen can, Blake and his black boy came within sight of the immense lagoon upon which the station was situated. The first thing they noticed was that sawyers had lately been at work felling the timber along the edge of the water. Following the fallen

timber up, they came at length to the last, a gum tree half cut through, yet still standing. Peering over the edge of the bank into the lagoon, the next object which presented itself to their eyes was the body of the unfortunate owner of the station sunk deep in the water.

Night was now coming on and nothing more could be done, so first having satisfied himself that the large mob of blacks who had hitherto made this station lake their head-quarters had some time since departed in a southerly direction, Blake and his boy rode home. The police detachment arrived at Salvia Downs sooner than was expected, and shortly afterwards Blake and his contingent sallied forth, leaving a couple of hands in charge of the station.

Arriving at the partly-sawn tree, their first object was to draw out the body of the murdered man from the water and bury it, an unpleasant task in more ways than one. Many sharp eyes had now more leisure to read the gruesome tale. The cross-cut saw was found lying under the body, which had so far rendered it invisible. Two white men had been sawing. One had been brained from behind, his body and the saw thrown into the water. The other man had then run away

along the bank, been speared in the back after he had gone a hundred yards, the life knocked out of him by blows on the head, and his body likewise thrown into the lagoon. This was also recovered and buried. During Blake's short absence at Salvia Downs a heavy tropical shower had fallen, washing out all tracks, but we have seen that he had taken the precaution to ascertain the direction which the murdering mob had taken, on his first visit to the spot, and as it afterwards proved this thunderstorm was purely local.

On visiting the station at the head of the lagoon it was found in a state of dire confusion, the whole place turned upside down, fixtures smashed, and, curiously enough, all firearms had disappeared. Tracks clearly showed where cattle and horses had been driven off.

Knowing that the blacks would make for their fastnesses in a formidable rocky range out west, the pursuing party, without attempting to follow tracks, which were much obliterated, took a short cut through a dense mulga scrub. On emerging from this, after some hours' hard work in the jungle, they found that they had not only cut into the tracks of the retreating blacks, but also found

their first camp, where they had made bough yards for bullocks. Here much was explained which had hitherto remained a mystery. Portions of rotting beef were hanging in the trees, having either been left by the blacks in their hurry, or possibly because they were so gorged that they cared not for them, whilst in one yard alone were three bullocks' heads, each beast having been shot through the forehead. This fact at once explained the theft of firearms, and pointed to the one black who understood their use—"Nicky Nicky." Portions of the lead lining of tea chests were lying about, proving that as he had not been able to find bullets, he had melted down this lead, and so formed them in a mould.

From what afterwards came to light there was no doubt that this ex-policeman was the instigator of the massacre and robbery. The tracks of some fifty black fellows and a few bullocks, but no horses, were very visible from this camp, and now the capture was only a matter of time, but no one dreamt of the extraordinary nature of the country which horses and men would have to negotiate before coming up with the black mob. Through open forest, plains of blady

grass, and dense scrub did the trail lie, thus for the first two days plain sailing, but then they came to a broken range, which at first sight seemed simply impossible for horses, whilst the tracks vanished altogether excepting to the keenest eyed amongst the troopers.

Before attempting this rocky barrier the horses were turned out to pick up what they could at the last bit of grass, for all vegetation ended at the foot of the rocks; some tiny pools of water were found here under an enormous boulder, so the billy was put on, and tea made. Blake was a very good tracker himself, but no tea for him till he had satisfied himself as to the direction which "Nicky Nicky" and his gang had taken, so he went ahead with some of the boys. It is difficult to describe to those who have not experienced it the nature of these chaotic rocky barriers, which occur here and there in Queensland.

The only description of fancy which occurs to me is that in ages past a huge mountain of the main range had been cast on to the plain, and in falling had shattered itself into a million blocks, varying in size from an ordinary boulder to a large barn, a cottage size prevailing. It proved an arduous and a long task to pick

out the tracks over these basaltic masses ; the winds had swept away what little dust there was, and Blake informed me that he was many times nonplussed, yet one or two of the leading " boys " puzzled out the trail yard by yard. None but those who have served in the *wild* parts of Queensland know what real tracking is, through any and every description of country. Even the younger generation of Colonials from other Australian Colonies have had but little occasion to exercise their powers of " smelling out," unless it were for the purpose of following strayed stock, which leave a pretty good trail.

Whilst I am writing this the war in South Africa is still going on, and I have lately had occasion to discuss the interesting topic of scouts and scouting with Australians who represented various colonies. Taking my cue from a case which occurred to me in the N. P., I put the following problem with reference to scouting by means of water. A deep river flows between our troops and the most likely position of the enemy. Balloons are sent up—no Boers are located. Scouts, both mounted and on foot, examine the southern bank of the river, even get half way across, they are not

fired at there, presumably there is no enemy on the northern side.

Now had a Queensland native trooper been ordered to "look out," what would he have done? He would have stripped himself and gone very far up stream, and no white man would have seen the way he went; then, gliding like an eel into the water, he would have dived to the opposite bank and come up right under it, at a place he had previously chosen, not so much to gaze, but merely to let his nostrils fill his lungs, then, having long before this taken in all points of both banks and allowed for force of current, he would drop gently down under the bank for the distance he had calculated on, making not so much movement in the water as would a rising fish. At length, having gained his point, he would quit the river inch by inch at some patch of rushy grass and cover, eyes and ears strung to highest pitch as he snaked his way, and from the moment of his having gained the bank he would have ample evidence to prove whether the enemy was in close proximity, and as he proceeded farther he would ascertain whether they were in force or not, stalking as no white man ever stalked.

the blacks were undoubtedly making. He further explained that the barrier ran much narrower to the north, but that he could not see the end of it. The pursuers finally reached the open country, found in which direction the blacks had crossed it, and then returned by a slightly easier and shorter route to their camp.

It was evident that the blacks, who were well acquainted with the country, had taken the more arduous route, hoping thus to throw off any possible pursuit of mounted men, a trick that could be traced to the cunning of the ex-police villain. It had also been remarked that the few cattle which they had with them had been driven off at a tangent some miles back.

The horses were now led, driven, and tumbled over the narrower line of boulders discovered; many delays occurring, owing to the men having to extricate a fallen horse here, to readjust a burst-open pack there. Eventually they reached the solid ground and had to camp as night was coming on.

The following morning, leaving one or two hands to guard the camp, the rest of the party scouted ahead, and at last saw smoke issuing from a river bed which ran parallel to the

Towering Rock.



PORTION OF LIMESTONE RANGE, CHILLAGOE.

[To face p. 160.]

TO VINH AIRPORT

range but at some distance from it. The troopers now made a long *détour* whereby they succeeded in getting between this range and the blacks' camp; meanwhile, Blake and his "boys" moved up.

The blacks on perceiving the troopers bolted on to the plain, but sighting Blake and finding that they were cut off on both sides made for the river bed, which was partly dry, and hid in the dense reeds.

The jins remained in the camp knowing that they would not be interfered with, and here as was expected was found the spoil raided from the station; most important of all, the clothes and accoutrements of the two murdered white men. Dilly bags were found to contain tinned provisions, powder and shot flasks, and manavlins of sorts, whilst rifles and shot guns were lying about wrapped up for the most part in 'possum skins.

Now the blacks were trapped. The reeds, owing to the absence of wind, were so still that a rat might have been heard moving had one been there. No one but those conversant with the extraordinary power of concealment possessed by the aborigines would have dreamt that some fifty or more black fellows were lying

in that small covert. Then one of Blake's "boys" entered the reed bed and very soon lifting a bunch of grass with a spear taken from the camp pointed to an almost invisible black skin. This "boy" was acquainted with the language of the tribes and proceeded to put the black fellow through a string of questions.

"Where was 'Nicky Nicky?'"

"Not here," was the answer; "left us long ago at the rock barrier with one firearm."

"Where are those who actually killed the two white men?" Three names were mentioned in answer. "Are they here in these reeds?"

"Yes, all three."

Orders were now given in a loud voice to the rest of the hidden gang, and they were bidden to come forth unarmed.

Finding that they were surrounded and seeing that the game was up the rest of the mob dropped their weapons and were made to stand on the bank of the river bed. The three murderers were then given up with great zeal by their companions to the troopers to be dealt with according to their deserts, much to the satisfaction of the other miscreants, who stated that they thought they were all going to be

shot. Before these were let free a reward of bullocks was offered for the apprehension of "Nicky Nicky." It may be here stated that this proved of no avail, and it subsequently came to light that that villain—the organiser of the massacre—had taken refuge with another tribe, but proved such a curse to his companions, by insisting upon their living entirely in rocky ranges, and allowing no fires to be lit, that they knocked him on the head and brought his body in to the nearest station as a proof of their act.

When Blake and his "boys" once more reached Salvia Downs they found that the white men left in charge, though fully provided with firearms, were in a state of terror, fancying that they were besieged from the fact that sundry cattle had been driven off by black fellows, whom they were convinced were coming back to murder them. Blake knew enough to tell them that this fright only emanated from their own cowardice, and sent them off to work.

A jin belonging to one of the "boys," who had also been left at the station, stated that she had tracked the raiders to their camp, where she had seen signs of their being about

to celebrate their theft of cattle by a corroboree.

Getting the direction from her, Blake soon after set off with one of his trackers. At length, seeing a tiny spiral column of smoke rising near the edge of a scrub, the horses were tied up, and the "boy" went forward to scout. Peering over the grass he saw a big black fellow engaged in hanging up some joints of beef in a tree, ever and anon picking off and eating pieces of the fat, and so engaged in this entrancing occupation that he could look at nothing else. The tracker, grasping his carbine, strode boldly and quietly up, and recognising the black called out in his own language, "Where are the bullocks, Wanny."

Now "Wanny" was the warrior of the tribe, a man standing over six feet in height and powerfully built, and for once he had been caught napping; but on hearing the challenge he caught up a huge nullah nullah, turned as he did so, and rushing upon the "boy" hurled the enormous club at him. Had this caught him it would have then and there ended all conversation between them, but striking his carbine with tremendous force it smashed the stock clean off; luckily, however, leaving lock

and trigger intact. The "boy," though spun half round, was quick enough to thrust the shattered weapon out like a pistol, and so shot his adversary full in the chest at close quarters. This considerably staggered Wanny, who, however, managed to hurl a piece of rock at him; this he dodged, and picking up the big nullah drove in the skull of the big chief as the latter tried to close with him.

It may be noted that there was no intention of attacking the blacks on this occasion, and Wanny brought his own death upon himself.

The cattle had not been driven far, for the raiders were aware that Blake had absented himself from the station, and had not expected his return so early, so, leaving the beasts, which they viewed, to look after themselves, the pursuers followed the prints of many naked feet, and closing in upon them by nightfall found by certain signs that a corroboree was being prepared in a large scrub. Creeping in through a dense mass of vegetation they came within sight of a large clearing formed in the dense bush. This was occupied by some forty or fifty warriors in their war paint. Then the boss of Salvia Downs crept up, his "boy" keeping watch in the rear.

Blake next performed a deed of derring-do, such as few men have ever before attempted, in fact, I doubt whether in such circumstances any white man had ever dared so much with Australian aborigines. Here was a large mob of blacks, working themselves up to a frenzy and fury equal to that of any dervishes, and far more warlike in appearance; stamping and whooping into the flames of their fires, rushing at each other with spear and club, fending off the blows in this mimic warfare with their yelamans or shields; their bodies painted so as to resemble skeletons, yelling and howling, with the jins seated around beating time to the weird songs with boomerangs, and urging on the warriors with shrill cries. Those who have witnessed a real corroboree at night, and not a got-up show, will allow that it is an uncanny and weird sight.

Leaving his "boy" behind, Blake stepped quietly into this throng of excited black men, armed only with an unseen revolver, and, holding up his hand, called in stentorian tones for one man, known to him as a leader in all devilry. With the strongly marked superstition prevailing amongst the tribes, and more especially shown during the hours of darkness, it evidently

seemed to the blacks as though a spectre had descended into their midst, for with one accord a dead silence fell upon them—their figures, a moment before so full of active life, seemed turned to stone, nor looked they at one another, all eyes were directed at the white man. At length, recognising the daring intruder and realising that he was of flesh and blood, the black who was called upon spoke in a low voice :

“What do you want?”

Blake, who knew the dialect, answered :

“I want all the cattle driven back to my station, and I will see what are missing—more, I want that none of you ever interfere with me or mine again. I shall not punish you for this, but if ever you trouble me again I will hunt you all down as I have hunted down the tribes who have killed my neighbours. If I find you behave yourselves I will allow you some day to camp near the station. If you do not—well—go to-morrow and bury your chief ‘Wanny.’ Promise.”

It did not take the blacks long to agree to the terms, confronted as they were by such a man, whose iron will they knew of old; and merely vouchsafing a very safe remark that

“Wanny” had prevailed on them to steal the cattle, they subsided into a sulky jabbering, leaving Blake and his “boy” to back out of the charmed circle.

This tribe, it may be added, were ever after on their best behaviour.

Another adventure I heard also from Blake’s own lips, in which no black man was concerned, was as follows :

An individual who combined the double occupation of bush-ranging and horse-stealing had a “down” on Blake owing to the latter having once run him in, so he set out with the intention of taking his life. This fact coming to Blake’s ears afforded him some amusement, nevertheless, he took care to keep an extra sharp look-out for strangers. One day when riding through an unfrequented part of the run he descried a mounted man in the distance, himself being hidden in the long grass. Pushing his horse along under a ridge he was able to come unexpectedly on the stranger at close quarters; he was in the habit of carrying a fowling-piece loaded with slugs in one barrel and wire cartridge in the other, and a very useful load this always proved in the bush. He had noticed that

the bushranger was armed with a repeating rifle. Blake rode straight up, watching the man's eye—there is always a warning tell-tale in this, be the man white or black, if one can catch it in time—without any apparent movement he had covered him with his gun and straightway asked him what he was doing there. "Looking for lost cattle," was the answer of the somewhat disconcerted miscreant, who had not been so ready in getting his repeater into the desired position.

"That's a lie," said Blake, "and you'd better clear," and he did, riding off and muttering deep oaths connected with "some other day," whilst the squatter watched him out of sight. Here the matter ended for the time being, but some months afterwards the two met again in a small township.

The bushranger, who doubtless had some of his pals about him, no sooner caught sight of Blake than he began to swear and "blow," and make insulting remarks. The latter simply let him expand a bit, and then fixed him with the meaning remark :

"You never were more nearly shot in your life than when I caught you on the run."

The man's eye dropped, he seemed to lose

all further interest in the conversation, and for the second time slunk off. Thus Blake held his own against white and black men alike wherever they might be, and he has now for many years been left in quiet enjoyment of his various stations, owing to the respect in which he is held by all alike—a typical squatter, and fortunately for Queensland there are many more like him.

Besides men such as these, and the first discoverers of the country, how greatly has Queensland benefited by those whom one may designate as the pioneers of the N.M. Police. There were many who acted in a way to protect the settler in the development of the unsettled portions of the country, and who by their knowledge of bush lore and black fellows, imbibed in some instances from their earliest childhood, rendered the various districts safe for all, and I may be allowed to take one grand example from that number—Mr. G. Murray, if I remember aright the head of the force in my time, and at present occupying the high position of chief police magistrate at the capital. As a mutual friend said to me lately, and I have the honour to agree with him, “One cannot say enough that is

good of this grand veteran of the bush. The beau ideal of a government servant, having served the government faithfully and well in every position he has filled. As a bushman he was not to be surpassed."

The photograph represents him together with some of his "boys" taken in the sixties.

During the Boer War in South Africa—which is not completed as I write—attached to one of our regiments was a native Australian tracker, "Billy."

One day the conversation turned upon scouting, and a group of English officers present were unanimous in deriding the powers of Australian aborigines in this respect, saying :

"We have heard all these wonderful accounts of reading the ground, and though there may be some shadow of truth in the matter, yet we don't believe more than half your fairy stories."

"Perhaps you will believe when you have seen the black boy do all that is asked him," responded an Australian officer present. "I'll bet he will track any of you up wherever you go, and bring back a correct report."

The bet was taken.

Early on the appointed day five officers

started, at different hours and in various directions, two on foot, three on horseback ; " Billy " being meantime locked up.

When at length he was let out he took up each track in turn, following it to a given period to enable him to get back to camp the same day and report.

When he returned note-books were taken out and he was told to proceed.

The tracker, first stating that the men had chosen their various routes over all the hard and rocky ground of the neighbouring veldt, then proceeded to draw five lines in the sand, and descanted on each track : those of the mounted men he had followed at a run—described how one had got off his horse and had then proceeded to light his pipe, producing the half-burnt match to prove it. Another had been thrown by his mount putting its foot into a hole whilst going at a canter, the horse had then bolted, the rider had caught it within a mile ; whilst a third had got off his horse and walked into the shade of some trees, and having tied up his charger had climbed one of these, presumably to get a view, as there was neither 'possum nor "sugar-bag" in it, said " Billy."

The footmen had given a little more trouble, especially one man whom the boy described as "silly fellow" because he had gone in his socks, had cut his foot at one point, and gone lame for the rest of his journey ; a piece of fluff from a sock was brought back as one proof, whilst the officer allowed the accident to his foot to be true ; dark brown, light brown, and grey hairs represented the three horses. In fact, " Billy " proved beyond doubt that he had run and read every track faithfully ; and afforded other proofs, by recording many minute finds and incidents that he had done so.

The officers were thoroughly convinced, and willingly handed over their bets to the Australian.

CHAPTER XIII

AN IRISH LASSIE

Return to Spring Creek—Shift Quarters—Guyanda Creek—A
Daughter of Erin

SHORTLY after I had recovered from the attack of ague, leave was given me to move to a district somewhat farther north, and glad was I to find that two of the old "boys" and the equally faithful mare "Timeringle" were to accompany me. One reason for this change in my plans was that some months previous to this I had bought a town allotment at one of the small ports, and had never been able to secure the title deeds, and in those days certain township property was increasing fast in value.

The result of this search for important parchments was connected with an amusing interview.

Having in due course taken up my new quarters, which consisted as heretofore of a comfortable bark-roofed hut situated as usual

upon a creek, made the acquaintance of the three new boys, and learned the names of the small mob of horses, I despatched a message to the agent who had completed the sale of my bit of land. Weeks passed without my getting any answer to the enquiry, and I was thinking of applying for leave of absence to prosecute the search myself, when one day a "boy" came up and saluted with a diabolical grin upon his face.

Upon being asked somewhat sternly "What name?" meaning, "What do you want?" he said that a "white Mary," *i.e.*, white woman, was hunting the camp for me, that she appeared "cabon saucy," and that she carried a "pretty feller piccaninny" in her arms.

To say the least, this statement sounded rather alarming, but in the circumstances I judged it would be best to let all hands hear whatever story or complaint the woman had to make. So I walked up to the "boys'" quarters, took my seat on an upturned bucket, and sent for her, for I heard she was resting in one of the jins' gunyahs.

Presently a stout young Irish woman, travel-stained and of dishevelled appearance,

came prancing up, carrying a squalling brat in her arms. I am used to the verbosity of the kindly natured Irish folk, but the "maxim" volleys of both English and Irish poured into me on this occasion were enough to make a white man beat a retreat. As for the "boys," they were in fits of laughter, understanding nothing, but tickled beyond measure at the girl's antics and pantomime. She opened her battery with:

"Shure yer washup's Irish by yer name."

I was not given a second's time to contradict her, so merely shook my head, upon which she raced on in the same breath that she would confine herself to English. I sat there for certainly half an hour, merely opening my lips to keep my pipe going. She spoke like a book with a copious index, never faltering for an instant.

Commencing at the very beginning of the history of her life she fired the whole story into me. So having passed in review certain incidents of her babyhood, this is what I heard:

"Me home's in County Kildare jist contagious to the big livil mountin an' thin I married Mick an' we jimmygrated over the

say an' the boat bad luck to it brought us across the Cape to this blissed country where people's bad and baccy's dear an' Mick can't smoke it where he is now an' me family the Guinanes is some of the besht folk in Kildare and we's gat plinty of bonifs an' boneens"—which terms I found later represented sucking pigs at various stages—"an' now me pore buy's in jail clapped there by his inimies cos he put his name to anither buy's bit o' paper what is last an' says he hurry up an' see yer hannar an' p'r'aps he'll pull yer tooth out cos I must tell ye I'm nigh mad with the vinim in my teeth an' says I——" Here she opened a capacious mouth and took in enough air to fill a football, this act apparently presented a favourable opportunity for me to retreat, but hardly had I moved from my bucket when with a bound she was on me, and grasping my arm almost shrieked in piteous tone :

"Shure yer hannar's washup yer wodn't lit Micky Quin shtarve in prisin an' me wid a young shlip of a Mick at the brist an' anither comin' an'——" but seeing we were going on to fresh domestic matters I quenched her, yelling out :

"Quin! Why the devil didn't you give

me your name before? He's the man——" but it was no good; she had got her second wind, and put in a heavily charged right and left.

"An' thin isn't Quin as good a family as inny in this paltry country, why it's meself can till yez——"

"He's got my title deeds," I roared in despair.

This statement put her out of action for the time, for she uttered in a solemn tone :

"An' haven't I got that same in me pockit, whin——"

But a further statement of her family connections and her husband's somewhat doubtful career proved of no further interest to me; seeing which she produced the deeds, which proved to be correctly drawn up.

The poor soul was well recompensed, for she had had a hard journey. It appeared that a hawker had given her a lift for many miles, and then she had walked thirty more to our camp. The jins took care of her that night, and next day escorted her to the nearest station on her homeward journey, carrying her baby and some rations. But she was bound to have many last words, and before

she quitted I saw that I was in for another palaver. This time I found it was to be a private one, for leading me round a corner of the barracks, and sinking her voice to a mysterious whisper—with little report this time :

“Hark,” she said, “says Mick to me, says he, ‘whin yer give his washup the dades arst him if he can’t lit me out to beguile the time a bit as he’s a perliceman.’”

Upon telling her gently that the thing was utterly impossible, she pondered a bit, drew closer to me, looked carefully round, and, sinking her voice yet more, remarked in a confidential tone, which was emphasised with many winks and nods of the head :

“Whishper! D’y know how yer hannar’s besht knives are claned?” I said “no.” “Well thin I’ll till yer. One o’ they black things the weemen I mane I was watchin’ thim an’ they takes yer besht knives an’ thin they shpits on ‘em an’ thin they rubs ‘em on their black thighs to give ‘em a polish like.” And having delivered this final remark as a crushing blow on my bachelor system of housekeeping, Mrs. Quin waited for no more, but with a “God bless yer hannar,” went

off in high glee, and with many more comprehensive nods and winks.

I am happy to add that friends gave her a helping hand when she got back to the port. Her Mick, however, had to "do his time."

I attended a coroborree of the "boys" a few nights afterwards, and the late meeting with Mrs. Quin was enacted in such a realistic manner, every pantomimic gesture, every touch of brogue was brought forward in such ludicrous light, and so truthfully represented, that it was simply the whole scene over again, acted in a manner that no white man could have attained to.

As I once before remarked, the aborigines are perfect mimics.

CHAPTER XIV

ANGLING

Mainly consisting of Sport, as Fly fishing—The "Palmer"—
Shooting Sharks—Tidal Waters—Crocodile's Nest—
"Dugong"—Gentlemen of Colour—Five o'clock Tea—
Turtle Hunting

WITH the exception of one or two incidents which took place a few months later—one of them being of an exciting nature, namely, the quest of a man who was bushed, which account I will detail further on in this narrative—our life at Guyanda Creek was not exciting, for the blacks in the surrounding districts were on the whole quiet, yet it was healthy, full of interest, and not without small adventure in the pursuit of sport for one who was satisfied with the minor fauna and numerous birds which are found in Queensland.

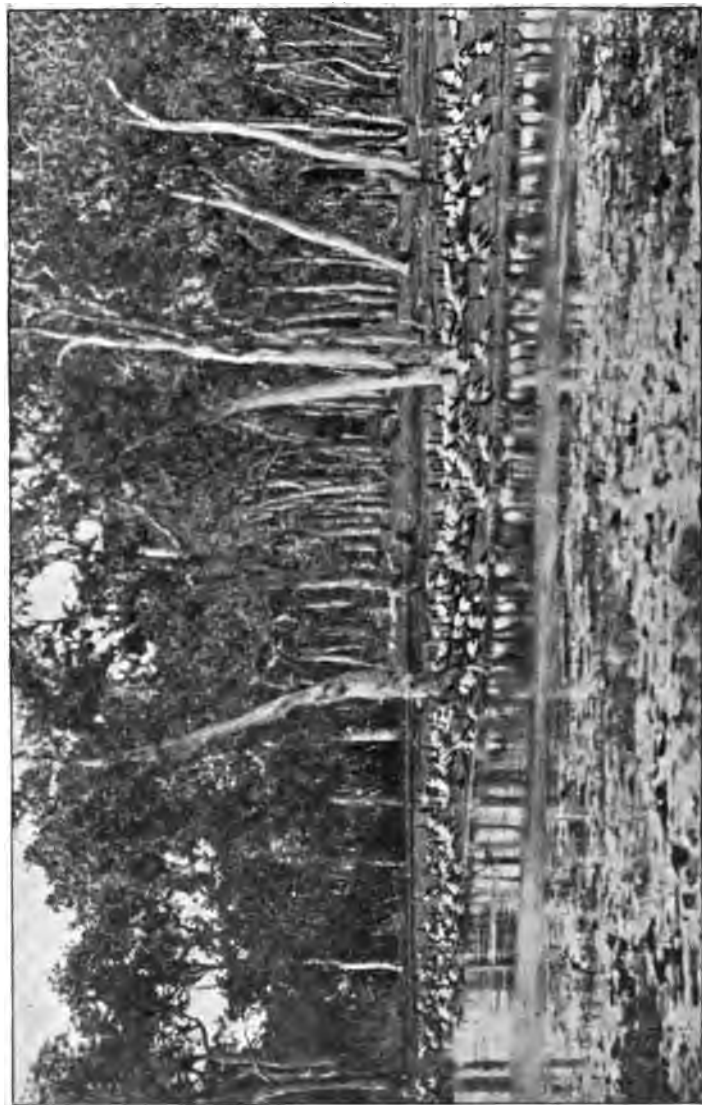
I remember that when a lad in England I had regarded Australia as a land composed of bush, which I interpreted scrub, and dried-

up plains, all barren as far as game was concerned. This certainly was the prevailing opinion in my day by those who were not in the know. But in the early sixties few travelled to the great island excepting for business purposes.

In the roving life of the native police, the object of which in those days was to patrol the outside stations and sample new country far beyond them, I found that practically during all seasons, wet or dry, wild fowl of every sort prevailed, ranging from black swans, "magpie," and other sorts of geese, down to the tiniest species of teal, and occasionally snipe. But of all these birds I preferred the genuine black duck, which is found in all five of the Australian Colonies, as grand a bird as our home mallard, many of them attaining a weight of from three up to four pounds; they possess a delicious subtle flavour, when properly cooked, which others besides myself have not found in any other species.

The forests, scrubs, and waters of Queensland teem with life for such as use their eyes. To my mind there is an indescribable fascination in hunting and fishing wherever you list, where the result of sport depends upon your

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



SPILLER'S SANCTUARY OF "MAGPIE" GESE, NORTHERN QUEENSLAND (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES).

[To face p. 18a.

VOYAGE ALPACABLANCO

own woodcraft and the keen use of your senses, and amongst forests and waters which have never heard the firearm of the hunter, be it rifle or gun, nor seen the glint of the fisherman's rod, your only companion being perhaps a keen little terrier, or more rarely an equally faithful "boy."

It was an experience I had long wished for. True, that in the districts scantily sketched in the opening chapters of these N.M.P. experiences, we had found hundreds of miles of such wild back country in the "never never"; but then circumstances were different, in that the blacks were bad, and, furthermore, I was not my own master.

Here at Guyanda Creek there was greater scope for bush wandering, the country was fairly quiet, and I was able to spell the horses for a few days at a time at one or other of the stations during patrol. Hospitable and kind as I invariably found the squatters, they cared but little for roaming about the bush, hunting quail or seeking orchids. They have hard enough work with their cattle and the general management of their run, and were I in their place I should follow their example, as, in fact, I often did, and take down my gun for a

Sunday afternoon's shooting, for the "pot," at black duck in the nearest waterhole; or loose the kangaroo hounds on an emu after the bird had drunk his evening fill at the same place, and then turn on to my bunk for a "bange," *i.e.*, sleep, and in such manner get my one day of rest, all the previous days of the week having been devoted by the squatters to cattle hunting or bullock punching, as the case may have been. Whatever the work consists of on a cattle station it is hard—very—and usually takes place under a sun of anything from 120 degrees up. In the police we had none of this sort of labour, though it was not by any means always beer and skittles.

I will touch first upon my favourite sport—that of fly fishing. I always carried a strong stiffly made fly rod with me. Whilst patrolling, this was fastened to the gun bucket which held my carbine—the only safe way to carry it, as it was thus protected by the weapon. One moonlight night I was strolling along by the bank of a beautiful creek which was subject to the influence of the tide. The water was running down clearly and rapidly; forests of tall palm trees overhung the opposite

bank, and in the shadow cast by this lovely feathery grove I heard the unmistakable rise of a large fish. This sporting sound occurring as it did in an ideal salmon pool recalled days spent on the Lochy in Scotland where I killed my first salmon in times long since gone by, and the thought occurred to me to try a salmon fly. In an air-tight case amongst all sorts and conditions reposed samples of old Pat Hearn's handiwork. I tried a medium-sized gaudy specimen, the fish took it with a mighty plunge, no doubt directly it came over him, for I could see nothing in that black part of the pool. He fought like a fresh run grilse, making desperate efforts to get to sea; but if he ran well so did the winch with its hundred yards of line, the stiff little rod did its work, and presently I was able to beach a beautiful specimen of the finny tribe, glittering in the moonlight like a bar of silver, its eye flashing like a ruby. Then and there I christened it, with proper accompaniments, the "palmer." This was the first one ever taken with the fly, and the name has been universally adopted in Northern Queensland ever since. This palmer weighed six pounds. Many have been killed since those

days, and far heavier fish, but they have been taken with spinners of sorts.

The scientific name of the fish, according to Dr. Günther, is *Lates calcarifer*. From its list of habitats it appears to be strictly inter-tropical, and he mentions specimens of it from India, Java and other places, its northern boundaries being Calcutta and China, limits of latitude which correspond pretty well with Bundaberg on the Queensland coast. It is a sea fish at certain seasons. The black fellows sometimes call it "barramundi."

I see from my old diary that, under the heading of "Fly fishing in North Queensland," I described this fish a little more fully as late as December, 23rd, 1871—in that number of the *Field*.

I visited this pool upon another occasion accompanied by a friend who was staying with me, and who hailed from the banks of the Clyde. We used the rod turn and turn about, and killed eighteen pounds of fish : this included three palmers, the best going nine pounds, and we used the same Irish fly to which we added white wings, which certainly rendered it more fetching, and it invariably carried the palm amongst flies.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



HOME OF THE "PALMER," NORTHERN QUEENSLAND (TAKEN IN THE 'SIXTIES).

[To face p. 186.

70-141 AIRBORNE

11

Another fish, which we dubbed fresh water herring, took a smaller edition of the same lure freely, but it was so bony and tasteless that we tried to avoid catching it. One night my friend's terrier pup disappeared in a mysterious manner. At the same part of the river, and on the same evening, we lost a good fish, which was taken by some monster whilst we were coaxing it ashore in shallow water—fly gut and fish were carried away; then, whilst still gazing at the spot, we saw a three-foot shark leisurely pass over the shallow.

The mystery was explained, the marauder had certainly taken our palmer, and most likely the small dog as well, as we remembered that the little animal was very fond of the water. We went home, and at night devised a plan of revenge which I carried out to my entire satisfaction the next day, and thereby inaugurated a new form of sport in connection with one of the most hateful forms of fish life. My friend had to take his departure, so I went alone, provided with a log line, shark hooks and revolver. First I caught some baits—in the form of whiting—with paste, then threw one out impaled on the shark hook. It was not long before the line began to move

off slowly, when, taking a round turn, I struck. The only answer at the end of the telephone was a dead pull, but directly I began to haul off went the thing seawards for all it was worth; but with such a rope in one's hands it is no question of play—simply make fast and either break or turn. He turned, I got him into shallow water and then commenced to practise. The first ball sent the blood flying and the shark too, but I got him back and riddled his head. He was two feet long, and contained nothing in his belly but a fish. I got three more that afternoon, but discovered no signs of our little dog in them—only fish. The carcasses were not entirely wasted, for I took the livers home for oil. I found they came up on the flow, so whenever time permitted I went down to the creek towards high water and much improved my pistol shooting.

Grey mullet of great size used to come up in shoals, we seined them, and the "boys" speared numbers of them besides, or they dammed them back in branch creeks and netted them in quantities.

To watch a "boy" spearing any sort of fish was interesting. He would simply cut a

long thin sapling out of the scrub, render the point as fine as a needle, and then squat alongside the water whilst the shoals were slowly forging their way up with the incoming tide. In this way fish after fish would be impaled, some landed, others lost, but the spearer seldom made a false stroke, and when the native stood up, as he sometimes did for minutes together, and remained motionless with uplifted arm in the act of striking, he resembled a martial statue carved in ebony. Far grander, to my mind, is the black human figure when modelled by a sculptor than the dirty white mutilated specimens one sees on the continent, or the newer ones of home manufacture. Alas, that kodaks were not invented in those days!

A casting net afforded much sport. Having to teach myself the art of heaving it I soon found that the only way was to strip, and thus do away with belt and buttons which would otherwise have hitched into the meshes. When I had succeeded in making it perform a perfect circle, I caught many small fish, also whiting, up to two pounds in weight, and sometimes a large flathead—this latter is an excellent fish for the table. At one of my

hauls I captured a horrid looking thing, all death's-head and spikes and jelly-like protuberances. The "boys" would not go near it, said it was "cabon saucy." Dr. Günther was kind enough to name it for me *Siencia horrida*, one of the poisonous perches.

One of the "boys" told me of a fish in his district, situated some miles to the south, which secured its prey—insects hovering over a waterhole—by knocking them over with a jet of water which it squirts from its mouth, and though I have never witnessed this, yet I have no reason to doubt his statement.¹ A sea fish with bright blue bones was a curiosity, and a good one to eat.

Jew fish I have caught numbers of with prawn, also king fish whilst spinning. Alligators, or rather crocodiles, were numerous in most of the tropical waters. I was riding along the upper branches of a river one day and saw a small one lying under the bank within ten yards of me: leaving the horse in a scrub, I blew a hole in the little saurian's

¹ This fact has since been corroborated by an old Queensland friend who found fish in a northern river squirting water at grasshoppers passing over them, and thus securing the dainty morsel.

side with a large horse pistol I had with me ; he only measured three feet. The largest I ever saw was shot in the Fitzroy and measured nineteen feet.

A crocodile's nest which was shown to me consisted of a large mound of dead river grass and sticks ; it was situated about forty yards from the river. The old "bird" was shot, and we unearthed some thirty-five eggs, each containing a young crocodile. The blacks said that out of this number about five would have grown up, as birds and fish prey upon them—a happy provision of nature.

The dugong hardly comes under the head of fish, for it is a mammal, and suckles its young; still, this seems an appropriate place to mention the mode of its capture. It is called "yungun" by most of the natives. A medical friend and myself joined as partners, with the object of collecting the oil of this sea cow, as it is well known to possess the curative properties of the cod ; and though we found from experience that this was not very freely taken up—or down—by the public, owing probably to its being a new thing, yet we lost no money over the business, as the flesh sold well. It tastes like beef, and also

resembles bacon, according to the part of the body it is taken from.

Being a sleeping partner, I sometimes found time and opportunity to absent myself for a couple of days, and had the luck to be present at the capture of a dugong. We very soon found that the grazing ground which they showed a preference for consisted of a salt water creek, in which grew a special sort of marine grass. We had secured a couple of boats and a large rope net, the meshes of which were nearly a foot square. This we placed at night across the creek at its entrance to the sea. The net was supported with buoys and large empty cans.

On the morning after my arrival, we pulled out to see what luck had befallen us, and observed from a distance that all the buoys were drawn together into a bunch. This looked well, and upon disentangling and attempting to lift the net, we found one dugong of six feet meshed and drowned, whilst there were not wanting signs that another had fought its way out by stretching the meshes. We had to tow net and fish ashore to clear the decks. It proved to be a fat cow.

Here was a grand savage life for the short time I was able to enjoy it. Living on dugong beef—fish of all sorts taken with hook and line, shooting the wild fowl which prevailed, excavating large eatable crabs from the muddy shore, their blowholes being pointed out by the “boy,” collecting quantities of rock oysters, and other shell fish, or wading under shelving banks with the casting net either to “chuck and chance it,” or attempt to stalk within shot of a shoal of fish.

This Robinson Crusoe sort of life was most fascinating, and without the drawbacks attendant upon that old hero of our childhood. It was more free in every sense of the word. He had clothes of skins, I had a single Crimean shirt only for sporting attire.

He was practically alone, I had a white mate even superior to Friday. Savages of a deadly type threatened him: we also had savages, but then, they were gentlemen!

The fact was that shortly after we arrived the “boys,” observing smoke from a neighbouring island, rowed over to it and found a small encampment of blacks, who, it appeared, frequented this islet during one moon annually for the purpose of procuring turtle and other

products of the sea. A few members of this tribe returned the visit the next day, paddling over in their canoes, which as usual were each individually made of one sheet of gum-tree bark. They proved most friendly natives, and brought many fine fish as a peace offering. After they had had five o'clock tea, which consisted of gorging damper and drinking the well-sugared fluid out of a bucket, we showed them the dugong net.

The "boys" understood their dialect fairly well, and great was the astonishment of the Myalls at learning our system of taking "yunguns," for we set the net again whilst they were in our boat. But if they were amazed at our manner of fishing, so was I, for one, much struck by the way they took turtle in deep waters, and without any appliance whatever, excepting their hands. Thus: We took the largest boat; one blackfellow paddled her with the greatest caution over the marine grass, in some twelve feet of water, whilst his companion squatted on the bow. Presently the keen eye of this look-out detected something, and with subdued excitement he directed the rower as to which way he should go, without, however, taking his eyes off the

water. Then he said one word to him, and the man of paddles gave way for all he was worth, guided by the sable pilot, who, bending his body from side to side, and thus following the zig-zag motions of the much frightened turtle—for turtle it proved to be—was now yelling from excitement and shouting, "Gie Gie," his muscles all standing out as he prepared for the plunge.

Whilst this was going on the natives on shore had run down to a point of land, yelling and capering with excitement, then some of them bounded into the sea and swam off to us.

I happened to be looking at them when I suddenly felt that the boat had lost way. The turtle hunter had gone, but so smoothly had he taken his dive that he left scarcely a ripple behind him. Then his companion stopped rowing and all was still; the sea being calm as a mill pond.

After a long wait—it seemed ten minutes but was most likely three or four—up came the black head from an unexpected quarter. He was evidently fast to something with his right hand, which was below the surface, for he used his left to support himself.

He first blew out wind and water like a grampus, then turned towards his mate with a fierce grin of satisfaction, but looking round saw the rest of his tribe tearing over the water towards him, upon which he quickly sank, and as speedily came up again alongside the boat ; this was doubtless to prove to us that he had got in "first spear," as they say in another form of sport, and to show that his prize was all safe, as it was turned on its back, its two fore flippers vainly pawing the surface, whilst its captor held it by the stout hind leg.

Then he shoved off and proceeded to tow it ashore ; a slow process, but we could not have lifted the thing into the boat. His mates soon caught him up, and we rowed leisurely after the laughing, joyous mob of big children, who never ceased playing every sort of mad antic in the water till they stood on the sandy beach, their black skins shining and glistening, when with one whoop they ran the turtle high up to the verge of the scrub and cut its throat—close to our tent.

We taught them how to bake a damper that night, and found that the jins quickly picked up this art of cookery. Next day we

sent them home happy with a bag of flour, a lot of fish hooks, and "manavlines" incidental to sea fishing.

Several more dugong were captured after I had returned from my trip: one of the monsters showed unmistakable marks of having been in our nets before.

CHAPTER XV

BIRDS AND RABBITS

Pigeons and other Bush Fowl—Giant Fig Tree—Chin Chin—
Notes on the Natural History of the District—"Them
Blankety Rabbits"—Midnight Raid on the Bunnies—A
Good French Settler

AMONGST the edible birds which are found on the continent of Australia the chief are wild fowl, pigeons and quail.

Queensland is well favoured in respect to these, and though many occasions arise when the sportsman might shoot till his gun is hot, my spare time was only taken up in adding a few specimens of each to my bag, and, besides, I found a great fascination in studying, where practicable, the habits, and mode of feeding, of all sorts of birds and animals, and in this manner collected and preserved many hundreds of specimens, thus ensuring plenty of employment during the evenings in skinning the various trophies. Black duck was the bird I pursued in preference to most of the others

for the pot, though many other species of anas were to be found in legions in the neighbourhood of Guyanda Creek. These large duck were found to frequent the lagoon in preference to running water, whereas many other sorts, amongst them emerald backed teal and pigmy geese, seemed to fancy the creeks and rivers, and I would secure many sporting shots by sending a couple of "boys" far up stream, who would descend by both banks and drive the fowl past where I was ensconced amongst the lower reaches.

Pigeons and doves of sorts are so numerous that a whole book could be written about them and their habits. I will only mention one or two. The wonga wonga is a magnificent bird with a breast on it resembling a small capon; it is very difficult to localise its note or "coo" in the scrubs, as the call seems to come from every direction but the right one. I used to be more successful in bagging them during the early morning when they were sunning themselves in the tall gum-trees in open forest country. The whampoa, or, as it is often most truthfully called, magnificent fruit pigeon, is as beautiful to the eye as it is good for food.

Fancy a large bird with an olive-coloured head, breast wholly purple, back emerald green, a golden bar across the wings and bright orange under them.

During the fruiting season their favourite haunt was the tops of the gigantic fig-trees amongst the dense foliage. The plan to adopt was to stand underneath these giants of the scrubs on a quiet day and wait until a small powdery mass of something fell, when with steadfast gazing you might at last discern the purple breast—more often than not out of shot, yet if the bird was within range and you brought him down, his mates would merely flutter a few paces, and thus one could locate others. It was breakneck work, one long stare into the heavens, whilst scrub leeches were devouring one's legs the whole time, but the birds were well worth these trifling inconveniences.

The Torres Straits Pigeon visited us regularly from New Guinea and the S.S. Islands at the time when the quandang berries were ripe in the palmy scrubs of Queensland. This bird swallows the little blue fruit whole, and evacuates the handsome corrugated stone. They arrive in countless flocks, and their

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA



BUTTRESS OF GIGANTIC FIG-TREE.

[To face p. 250.]

70 And After...

markings are slate colour and white—easy to see, and easy to shoot.

All three of the pigeons which I have mentioned are excellent eating.

The only time that I was caught by the stinging trees was on one of these occasions when stalking pigeons in a scrub. Mercifully for man and beast this gigantic nettle emits a powerful smell; and its large bright green leaves and red berries give warning to the eye. I have seen it ranging from ten to fifteen feet in height, but the specimen that I brushed against was a small bush: it stung my hand and bare arm, and made me feel very sick and giddy. For more than ten weeks afterwards did I feel the numbing burning sensation every time I washed my hands. Enough to say that if a horse is fairly stung he will die in madness.

Upon my return home I discovered the foul plant, as a small specimen, at Kew; and Dr. Hooker, to give him his title at that period, informed me that they would have to fence in the specimen, as more than one person had fingered the pretty green leaf with dire results.

I had a keen little terrier that was my

constant companion on these petty hunting excursions—black and tan : by name Chin Chin ; she would hunt quail, and such small beasts as bandicoot and 'guana, with all the zest of her race.

She did not retrieve, but would follow and point out a winged bird if it were possible. Though very obedient to her master, she was half wild in some of her habits, notably, when she had a family. The pups were brought forth in a hollow log in some scrub or other, upon one occasion half a mile from the camp, and I should never have found the "nest" if one of the boys had not tracked her up.

In all minor forms of sport Chin Chin was good all round. She would tree a 'guana during the day, or "set" him in a hollow log ; also locate a 'possum in the branches at night—very often when it was too dark to descry the little animal myself.

Scrub wallaby we would not take the trouble to hunt ; but his fellow, that forms its seat in the tall blady grass like a hare of the old country, Chin Chin would put up, enabling me to get a quick shot as the two-legged beast bounded like lightning over all impediments. The hind quarters and tail of this

marsupial I generally managed to carry back to camp. Whilst on the subject of those animals which carry their young in a pouch, I may mention that upon one occasion I caught a marsupial mouse, which I saw labouring along a low branch in the scrub, and found upon examination that she carried a full-grown young one in her pocket, which she never attempted to get rid of, and still retained after I gave her her liberty.

These were interesting "outings," taken on days and at hours whenever the duties pertaining to the force permitted.

It was during these wanderings that I made a fair collection of birds and small animals—male and female of each—some of which still remain to me: but my snake skins have long since been used up, for belts and other purposes.

I could absent myself from camp with a clear conscience, knowing that if I were suddenly required there any of the "boys" could run my tracks and quickly find me.

One evening a townsman from the little port entered the barracks, to tell me that he had "ridden hard to procure advice and help in destroying an enemy which was threatening

the hearths and homes of himself and his neighbours."

On urging him to speak plainly and simply, he did, for drawing himself up and focussing me in a dignified manner he uttered in a reverential tone, "It's them blankety rabbits."

Judging from the experience of other colonies, this was certainly a very deadly peril, and not a matter to be lightly discussed. So having produced a bottle of rum and lime juice—the most wholesome blend that we made in the Colony in those days—and filled our pipes, I was prepared to listen, he to recount.

It appeared that a Frenchman had just arrived in the afore-mentioned little port in a small schooner. He had some weeks before this purchased a block of land in the neighbourhood, and amongst his goods and chattels he carried with him a hutch full of rabbits. He had meant to keep this little fact to himself, but one of his hands had come ashore for a drink, and commenced to "blow" about the breed of the bunnies.

No sooner did the Frenchman become aware of the infuriated state of the townspeople, when this news of the plague ship had been sprung

upon them, for the sailor had calmly inferred that his master's intention was to breed rabbits on a large scale, than he cast off from the wharf and anchored his schooner out in the stream, where revolver in hand he harangued the irate mob, who had come down to the wharf in hopes of seizing the would-be marauders. He told them that he intended to breed rabbits on his own land in spite of any one; that he had miles of rabbit-proof netting with him, that he cared nothing for their curses, and that he would shoot the first man that attempted to board his ship.

So there the matter stood, only the inhabitants determined to guard the shore night and day until their messenger returned from the barracks.

It was at once evident that had these rabbits been introduced, many would have escaped, overrun the whole district, eaten up every bit of cultivation, and fouled the country generally. But I knew that any one or two of the "boys" could do the trick, and, what is more, would love the job. This was a matter of repelling an enemy of the most deadly kind; and the country—for they would eventually invade every part—must be saved.

So I called the "boys" up, and explained the situation, telling them that the rabbits were in a box lashed to the upper deck, and that that box and its contents must go out to sea during the night ; but strongly impressing upon them that whoever undertook the raid carried his life in his hands, for that he would inevitably be shot at if discovered.

The "boys" looked upon the whole thing as a great joke, and all wanted to go.

Two only were chosen, being the right number, as they themselves allowed. The messenger from the threatened township who had been kept out of earshot was now called in, one or two necessary documents were attended to, and he was dismissed with the promise that his besieged fellow citizens would be relieved if possible.

A couple of days after this interview, I was sauntering along the camp creek at dusk, when my little terrier began to bark violently, evidently hearing something in the nearest scrub. Hurriedly creeping behind the nearest cover, I saw two Myalls emerge on to the sandy plain which bordered this part of the river ; they were in full war paint, the white lines on ribs, legs, and face, so depicted as to

cause them to resemble skeletons. They each carried a spear at least, and were evidently scouting by their cautious movements. I got out my revolver and prepared—to use the proper expression—"to sell my life dearly," wondering at the same moment how many more of the tribe might not be surrounding me. Chin Chin, meantime, had crouched close to my side with all her bristles up, when to my astonishment she slowly drew up to the two figures as a setter does to birds.

I heard the word "Sinsin" uttered in a whisper, when the little bitch suddenly bounded with delighted barks on to the two skeletons. One caught her up in his arms, and with a guttural "Marmy" they both came towards where I was lying hidden, for they had seen me long ago, but had not been sure of my identity until their little Sinsin had revealed herself to them.

As I wanted to hear the story of their adventure before we returned to the barracks, I had a fire made, as the evening was turning cold, and sat down to listen. I will discard the "pidgin" English which was our usual mode of communication, and relate their story in the vulgar tongue as follows:

“ There was sometimes moonlight that night. We hid our clothes about one mile from the port, then painted ourselves and rubbed emu fat over our bodies. We climbed a tree when we got nearer, and saw the ship anchored in the stream ; there was a light on the deck, and one man moving about, because sometimes he shut out the light.

“ We sunk deep in the river, and came up near the ship ; and all was quiet, so we climbed up the anchor chain, watched till the man's back was turned, then gently ran till, before he faced us, we hid. We each had a knife to cut the lashings. The light was near the rabbit box. We had nearly cleared the box, having cut nearly all the ropes, when a rabbit got caught or something and squealed. The white man rushed up and seized C——, but could not hold him owing to the emu fat, and C——threw him on the deck : he was knocked half silly, but scrambled up and rang a big bell which was hanging there, and yelled, ‘ The blackfellows ! the black devils ! Help ! ’ but we did not notice him, for he had no gun. We kicked out the light, and at last got the heavy box on to the side of the ship, and as we shoved it overboard the white men were

rushing up and firing at us ; but they could not see us as we were over the side and slipped into the water and dived. When we came up the tide had taken us forty yards from the ship. They had now a strong light and saw us, and every time they shot we dived at the flash ; and then we heard a boat coming after us, so we drowned all the rabbits and let them row after the box, whilst we made a long dive right across the river, ran through the scrubs many miles till we got opposite the barracks, re-crossed the river again, and here we are."

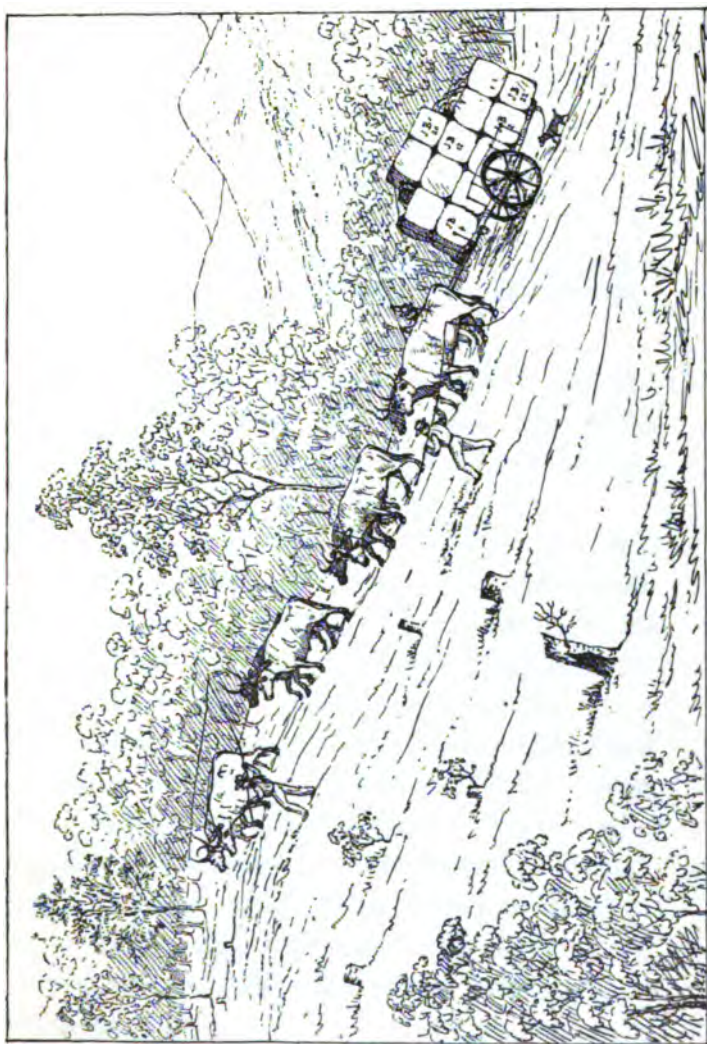
So the raid was well carried out without loss of life on either side except to the bunnies. Only trained "boys" could have executed it in such a neat manner, and they were well rewarded, whilst their fellow troopers and the jins were not forgotten, and all were sworn to secrecy.

The Frenchman inserted a strong letter in the local "rag" to say that he and his crew had been nearly murdered and quite robbed by a tribe of ghostly looking cannibals, concluding his violent letter by asking, "Where are the Police?" Presumably the townspeople had a shrewd guess that it would

have made them appear as "New Chums" had they applied to the force; and so the matter ended.

I heard subsequently that the Frenchman settled down on his country lot and proved a very good man, for though he passed on any reference to rabbits with a shrug of the shoulders, yet he acclimatised every sort of useful shrub and fruit-tree, fenced in with his rabbit proof wire, and in a few seasons produced a show which interested all those who came to see his botanical gardens, and they were many.

WHEAT OF CALIFORNIA



WOOL TEAMS.

[To face p. 210.]

TO VINO AIRBORNE!

CHAPTER XVI

RIDING FEATS

A Bobbery Pack—Wild Pigs—A Dingo Hunt—B—— rides a Bullock—Squeejee's Rough Paces—"Rarefied" at Last—B—— wins his Bet

DURING one of our patrols, whilst on the return journey and within some fifty miles of our camp, we spelled for a couple of days at the cattle station of a Mr. B——

He was a native of N.S.W., and had overlanded cattle and horses into Queensland whilst yet that colony was a portion of his own. B——, though of pure Scottish descent, combined all the useful characteristics of a blackfellow's strongest points—tracking and scouting—in fact, I almost invariably found that the native born colonists were nearly equal to the troopers for alertness and reading signs; men of untold value to act as the eyes of an army, and who would not allow themselves or their followers to be ambushed or entrapped.

At this period, however, B——'s keen senses were only exercised in the tracking and recovery of strayed bullocks or horses. He possessed a wonderful pack of dogs of all sorts, from lordly looking kangaroo-hounds to mongrels of every size and colour, and with this bobbery pack he invited me to hunt wild pig.

I have frequently heard it stated that dingoes are the descendants of domestic dogs left by the great navigator Cook, and that he at the same time introduced the pigs which are found in many parts of Northern Queensland.

The country haunted by the porcine contingent consisted of some large rushy valleys ten miles from the station. For reasons of their own the cattle avoided this portion of the run, and the pigs were left in undisturbed possession, excepting that about once a year B—— was in the habit of making a raid upon them—to keep their numbers down.

The hunting of the porker proved rather a tame affair. Upon gaining the rushy valleys the pack soon drove a medium-sized boar from his lair in the long grass where he had betaken himself during the heat of the day.

This valley was dominated by an endless flat plain, but in spite of all our efforts nothing would induce the animal to face the open. Many times various members of our mongrel pack got hold of the quarry, only to be shaken off or trampled on, till at last from sheer rage and exhaustion he backed up against a rock, and with champing jaws and wicked little eyes faced his persecutors; but though they tried many times to rush him, not one hound could get a permanent grip, whilst more than one received an ugly gash. Such a fight was cruel for all engaged, and as the object was to thin out the pigs we shot him, and two more shortly afterwards; but none of the three had good tusks—presumably fresh blood was needed in the breed.

Whilst engaged in performing the final rites to the third pig, one of the pack, which had been feathering about the blady grass, suddenly opened, her companions immediately rushed up to her to share in the good news, and the whole lot tore up the bank and on to the plain in full cry—only the music consisted of every sort of note from cat calls to short deep barks.

“Another pig?”

"No," said B——; "a dingo, and no flies about it."

I had had a lot of cattle hunting before joining the force, had done a little mild racing on roughly marked courses, and had ridden all sorts during my colonial experience in a Colony where one practically never walks—excepting, as often happened, a man would walk a mile to catch his horse for the purpose of riding two miles. In the old country I had three enjoyable seasons in Norfolk when that grand old specimen of an M.F.H.—the late Mr. Villebois—ruled the Marham country; but never till this dingo hunt did I know what it was to *go* and go free, that is, without encountering such obstacles as timber and paddy melon holes. A horseman of the prairies would appreciate my meaning. Let any one picture the scene—a boundless plain with here and there slight undulations; ground firm and covered with short grass; a hot sun, yet tempered by a soft and at the same time exhilarating breeze; mounted on fast stock horses, old in the sense that the riders could teach them nothing; the coolness and freedom of one's apparel, consisting of cabbage tree hat, Crimean shirt, moleskin breeches,

and thin knee boots ; and a belt with pouches to hold all together.

The pack had got a fair start before we could get out of the gully, and here B—— beat me by a good two hundred yards, for he put his horse at a place which I had already passed, judging it to be impracticable ; this was where the elevated plateau was gained by an almost perpendicular ascent of clay and stones. It was stupendous, but B—— simply threw himself forward on his horse's neck, clutched the mane, and the active beast, who was as anxious to join the pack as his master, simply kneeled his way up, and when near the top with one or two terrific plunges threw himself on to the level ground. I pulled up to witness this feat, and certainly have never seen anything like it before or since. The first thing that caught my eye, when in a more sober way I had also gained the flat, was B—— going like the wind, rein hanging over his arm whilst he was calmly engaged cutting up a pipe of tobacco.

Our bobbery pack had gained a long start. In the far distance I viewed them topping a ridge ; when I reached this they had disappeared over the next, and so had B——.

How the animal I bestrode swept on—like a whirlwind, frightened quail rose from under his feet, only to drop at once on one side or the other as if from fear of being overtaken. For a few yards or more we fairly raced a plain turkey, which, however, at length rose in the air, after its first unwieldy flappings, a few feet above the ground. But the pace after an hour of this sort of work began to tell. The horse pricked his ears, and there in the distance was B—— standing upright on his saddle and viewing the ground. I had scarcely reached him when he cried, as he dropped like an acrobat into his seat, “There they are, the two dogs, going a ‘docker’ under the scrub away to the right”; and then I saw that the swifter kangaroo hounds had left the mongrel pack behind, and were gaining on the dingo, which was striving to make his point the scrub. Again we followed, and at length had the mortification to see the two hounds throw up outside the scrub; but what was this, blowing and puffing and disappearing into the tangled bush, without taking notice of anything but the spoor of the dingo—the little bitch which had first found the quarry. Then after a few minutes’ interval we heard

the sounds of scuffling and fighting. The remainder of the pack rushed in, so we threw the reins over the horses' heads, and followed on foot as best we could.

No cattle had been through this jungle, and we had to cut and fight our way to where we heard the uproar of yells and baying. At length we gained the scene of strife, found the dingo apparently dead, and the plucky little bitch severely bitten. Yet after the wild dog had been mauled by the whole pack, one of its eyes blinked when I had reckoned it ten minutes dead ; and so B—— killed it outright—as they have frequently been known to recover after receiving fearful wounds. B—— knew of a water-hole near by, and men, horses and hounds took a well-earned rest under the shade of the Ti-trees which surrounded it.

B——, unlike some others that I met with in my wanderings, was totally exempt from colonial "blow." He was a silent man at the best of times, and one might be for months in his company and never hear from his own lips any references to his prowess as a horseman. Though I had heard many rumours of his various feats in the saddle, it was only

upon our return to the station that these were confirmed.

We found some young colonials assembled there for the purpose of mustering, and during B——'s temporary absence one evening, the talk grew fast and furious as to what he could and could not do. At last one of his chief backers roared out :

"My word, I'll bet you he can ride a bullock that's never been handled."

"Have you ever seen him do it?" cried one of the audience.

"No."

"Then I'll take you he can't ride it to a finish."

"Done with you," said the first man, and the bet was registered. B—— appeared on the verandah shortly afterwards, and was immediately surrounded by a noisy crowd, all shouting at once, and detailing the nature of the decision which had been arrived at. Pushing them aside he sat down in one of the "squatter" chairs and lit his pipe, and presently remarked :

"Well, it's pretty good cheek your putting me up to ride a beast before asking me."

There was silence, and he continued :

"If I do say I'll have a try who's going to choose the bullock?"

"What do you say to the Squeejee heifer?" remarked one of the crowd, evading the question.

"The crankiest beast in the mob," laughed B——. "All right, I'm game, run them in to the yard to-morrow, and don't let's have any more jaw over it."

It was explained to me that this animal with the queer name had met with an accident to one of her eyes in the days of her youth, which had distorted her vision and caused her on occasions such paroxysms of rage that she charged every person and beast whenever she was taken with the fit.

When the mob was yarded up the following morning, I found no difficulty in discovering Squeejee, the vixen was horning every beast that approached her; a fiend amongst her otherwise quiet companions.

B—— soon appeared with his friends, and looked all over the man to do the job, a picture of muscular activity, even amongst his mates, who were all clean limbed youngsters, and almost his equals in horsemanship. "Mount as I please," he had bargained for, and we

saw him climb like an acrobat on to the cross beam over the gate which formed the egress of the yard. Then he sang out, "Let 'em rip." What an eye the man had—for as the heifer came rushing, plunging, and bellowing, with head down, in the midst of the throng of cattle all furiously fighting for the paddock, B—— calmly dropped on to her back as into a saddle, and there remained seated, in spite of tremendous jams to his legs from various beasts in the narrow space, for these were terrified beyond measure by the descent of a man apparently from the clouds.

As for Squejee, for the first twenty yards she simply lost whatever reason she possessed, then realising that the thing was actually on her back, with a series of terrific forward leaps and bounds, and yelling madly, she dashed for a clump of trees, totally ignoring the direction her companions had taken. This move, as we learnt later, B—— had foreseen, having "looked at his fences," as he expressed it, in the early morning. First she dashed against the bole of a great gum-tree with the object of smashing her rider's right leg; the only result was that she nearly drove her own off ribs in, as B—— coolly threw his limb across

the animal's withers. A blackfellow, who had come out to see the show with the other station hands, happened to be running close behind yelling with joy, and shouting most profane words in encouraging tones to B——. It evidently occurred to Squeejee all of a sudden that this ribald dark-skin had something to do with the load on her back, and wheeling round as on a pivot she charged full at him. Many another man would have gone down gored; not so our ebony friend, he was round and up a tree like a black squirrel, and the heifer only succeeded in carrying away a large lump of turf on her horns. Baffled of her prey, who was now jabbering at her in deriding tones from the topmost branches, a bright thought struck her. What evidently occurred to her bovine mind was that she would rub off the man on her back just as she got rid of flies in the scrub, for she rushed straight under some low-lying branches. B—— flattened himself out in plenty of time, and was nearly swept off; but we saw him emerge safely clinging to the beast's neck and rump with hand and heel, then a quick turn, and he was into his seat again and waving a stout switch which he

had somehow annexed. Squeejee now pulled up. With downcast head, and blowing jets of foam from her nostrils, she ruefully contemplated the situation.

While she was thus played out B—— gently urged her on, and guided her with his switch towards the yard again, into which she at length quietly walked, after a few feeble attempts to diverge from the proper course. B—— then jumped off, and the poor brute was so relieved that she threw herself down on the dusty ground and took no further interest in the proceedings. She was “Rarified” with a vengeance, for B——, who had sent for a tub of water and a feed for his late mount, approached her quietly on the side of her sound optic and stroked her head, and she only blew a gentle sigh of satisfaction. He let the slip rails down, and next morning we found her all gay with the rest of the mob.

So B——’s backer won his bet.

I heard that others tried to accomplish the same feat at a subsequent period, but none succeeded, excepting a black boy, and he only indifferently. The slippery shiny coat of a bullock causes the greatest difficulty in sitting

tight. B—— got round this by previously wringing out his breeches in a bucket of water ; yet such was the seat of the man upon anything with four legs that my impression was that he could have dispensed with this “ water cure.”

CHAPTER XVII

"JIM"

"Piled up" in the Fitzroy—Slim Jim—A "Bogie" and a "Bange"—A Nasty Position—Jim speaks Firmly—The "Battle of the Bogie"—Jim knocks out the Greaser—My Friend the P.M.—Blackfellow Hung—Chin Chin's Narrow Escape.

Soon after my return to barracks, I received a message requesting my presence at headquarters on matters connected with the force ; so having placed a suitable individual in charge at Guyanda Creek I proceeded to the coast and caught a steamer bound for Rockhampton.

On this sea trip a couple of incidents occurred which both affected me indirectly.

We were no sooner clear of the land and in a tumbling sea than an emigrant, who happened to bear the same name as myself, fell overboard from the fore part of the ship, was carried like a streak under the paddles, and never seen again ; boats were lowered,

and everything possible was done, but all we found was his hat.

That was incident number one. Now for the other—which concerned me more nearly.

There were no ladies on board, and only two or three men in the saloon. One of these proved a real "white man," and I shared a cabin with him. I will call him "Slim Jim," and if it had not been for his alacrity and presence of mind, a few hours later my colonial experience might have come to a sudden end.

The fact was we piled up on a sandbank near the mouth of the Fitzroy, the tide at the time rushing furiously up the estuary, and as the captain mentioned casually that there we should remain for some hours, a small detachment from the steerage and cabin determined to swim out to a dry spit of sand visible some hundred yards away. Slim Jim said he felt lazy and would read and smoke until we returned. I left my clothes in the paddle box, descended by the floats, and reached the bank with the others.

The day was hot, and we disported ourselves in the shallows, collecting shells and flotsam, and trying to bail up mullet in the creeks.

Then a roll in the hot sand and a smoke, for of course we had brought the wherewithal for this purpose on our heads, and lastly a "bange," and what better word is there than this colonial one to express a stretch out, or, as sailors term it, "a stretch off the land."

Eventually I happened to stray some distance from the others, and paddling through shallows and holes scooped out by the tides gained at length the solid north bank of the river, where some arum-like lilies caught my eye.

Upon my return I found that the waters had increased, also that my mates had swum off again on their return trip. Their tracks showed that they had very properly gone a long way up the stream before taking the water. I did the same, as I thought, but not enough, as the event proved, to catch the floats. As I found myself drifting past them I called for a rope, but the only answer I got was from a big red-faced greaser, who levelled a torrent of oaths, coupled with the most filthy language conceivable, at me, finally yelling out that he'd see me damned, etc., etc. Here was a nice reception, and from a man I had never even spoken to, but there was

not much time to "argufy," as I clean missed the floats, then scraped along the smooth slippery part of the hull, only to find my legs sucked downwards. At length, getting a grip with my fingers and nails into a chink of the plates, I coo'eed as loud as I could with the breath left in me. At the same moment, to my great relief, appeared Jim, who merely said, "Keep cool," then dropped me a rope, which I caught as it drifted past, and hung on to for all I was worth. Two or three men hauled me on board, and then threw a rug over me, as I had left my clothes in the paddle box. Jim gave me a nip and a smoke, and stated that he had seen a man "volleying about" over the side, and thought that he was slanging some one who might have come off in a boat, but that when he got up from his deck chair to look he grasped the situation ; like lightning seized the first coil of rope and got it over to me just in time, as I have stated. Jim was a most unassuming man of gentle manners and possessing a calm, soft voice. "You were a foolish lot," he continued, "to try that 'bogie' here, as the place is full of sharks ; however, it's all right now, and I shall take it upon myself to speak firmly

to this engineer, and admonish him." And he did!

Before doing so he brought me my clothes, which I put on leisurely, being for the moment rather played out. Then he found out the name of the ruffian, and sent for him.

The man came quickly, head in air, smoking his pipe, and in a bullying, bantering tone said:

"Did you send for me, young man?"

"I did," quoth Jim, in his calm tones, "I would not keep you a day longer if you were in *my* service, and I shall report you after witnessing your cowardly and offensive conduct just now."

"I'd be very sorry to live with the likes of you," retorted the bully, who up to this seemed to think he was going to get off with a sermon.

"Well, it's very certain you would not live *long*," continued Jim, who then concluded his discourse in an unexpected way, though in the same even tones. "You are one of those cowardly cruel brutes who are the curse of this Colony."

"Oh, is that yer talk?" spat out the greaser.

"Not all; I would further remark very

gently, that you are a stinking son of a sea cook, and possess no more heart than a cucumber. Ah ! you look as though you were going to strike me. Pray remove that pipe before it's driven down your throat."

Before this sentence was concluded, the engineer, who at first was evidently puzzled by the little man's tone and language, literally tore off his coat, and, with a furious torrent of vile abuse, made a blow at Jim, which would pretty well have settled him had it got home; but he merely threw his head on one side, and with a smile remarked :

"I'm so glad you have put your pipe down."

At this moment I saw the skipper's bronzed face peering from the bridge, a delighted expression spreading all over his features. Foiled in his first attempt, the next blow of the greaser, from sheer strength, broke through his opponent's guard, doing no more damage, however, than raising a flush on Jim's face as he stepped back. The latter at present acted on the defensive, evidently to wear his huge antagonist out; but at length after feinting a bit, his set smile died away as he saw his opportunity, and with a quick rush he put

in his left with such a crashing blow on the bearded chin that the big man spun round and came down with hands on the deck.

However, he was not knocked out yet, for after an interval, during which his opponent calmly waited and watched, he shook himself together, and then made several furious rushes at his small antagonist, who avoided them by hopping about like a dancing master; this so enraged the other that he lost all control over himself, and livid with rage rushed at his adversary like a bull at a gate. Jim thus had an easy task, for with a smart upper cut he sent the engineer to the regions below.

The fact was that neither combatants nor spectators had noticed what was now very evident, that the men had fought right up to the fore hatch, and the engineer's foot slipping on a plate he secured a knock out, and knock downstairs for himself, at the same moment. Jim was quickly down after him, helped to carry him up on deck, placed him in the shade, put ice on his head, tended him like a brother, and nursed him till he came to. He explained to the crowd that he did not do it on purpose—a fact which was obvious to us. Marvellous to relate no bones were broken, but the shock

nearly finished the beaten bully, and he had to be invalided ashore. Jim was much upset, which the skipper remarking said :

“ Sir, if it's any consolation you've licked the biggest bully in the A.S.N. fleet.”

“ But why did he want to pitch into my mate when he was defenceless ? ” asked Jim.

“ Simply because he was in the water and powerless,” returned the captain. “ When the others came aboard from the bank he never said a word to them.”

There was one peculiarity about Slim Jim which I have never noticed in any other man. He would use most shocking language ; yet delivered in an even flow of gentle and calm accents, in ordinary conversational tones, whilst never raising his voice, in fine, this soothing lullaby would have sent an infant to sleep. Not that he ever played to the gallery, this gentle swearing was meant for his own ear alone ; as he said when questioned : “ It is neither loud nor vulgar, and it acts as a mighty mental relief to my feelings, when those feelings are upset by annoying circumstances.”

I noticed that his face always wore a most

benevolent expression whilst thus communing with himself.

I have given the light weight a suitable alias ; but he was my good friend for many years after the " Battle of the Bogie," and I trust that he is going strong still.

Before I quitted Rockhampton on my return journey I went to see the P.M.—a grand old man and friend of former days.

I found him just finishing his breakfast when I reached his house, and preparing to go out, as he said he had a little job on hand at the jail, and further begged me to accompany him. The little job as I soon learnt was the hanging of a blackfellow who had assaulted a white woman very grievously, and had then placed her whilst senseless on the line before an approaching train. My little terrier, who usually accompanied me everywhere, had a narrow escape from a ghastly death at this execution.

When we came to the jail yard we found the whole of the prisoners assembled and surrounded by the warders ; having been turned out of their cells to witness the ceremony.

The parson then walked to the foot of the

gallows reading the prayers, and closely followed by the prisoner, who soon ascended to the drop ; and it seemed pitiful to see him scanning his native mountains, scrubs, and plains with wild sweeps before the cap closed his view for ever.

And now I noticed for the first time that Chin Chin had taken her seat directly under him, in the middle of the very flap through which the body would descend. I coaxed her, threatened her, but all to no purpose. There she sat as though glued to the spot. It was uncanny ; why was this the only occasion on which she disobeyed me ? It was only when the rattle of the fall was heard above her did she seem to realise the situation, as with a piercing yell she sprang away, and so escaped by a bare few inches.

Upon my return to the home port I noticed that my friends seemed unusually pleased to see me, and upon asking the reason for this friendly demonstration they showed me a telegram from Rockhampton, " Kennedy fell overboard under paddles on up trip ; was never seen again."

CHAPTER XVIII

MONSIEUR

Monsieur Taxy—His Spicy Appearance and Full flavoured Songs—Botanist and Skin Collector—The Frenchman in Love—Peculiar Notions—An Amorous Quest—The Lost Foreigner—The Dusky Beauty—Adieu to Taxy

WHEN I reached the barracks I was told by the "boys" that a young Frenchman had been to see me, that he was coming back again soon, and that at the present moment he was eating scrub. His name was Taxy, they averred. Subsequently I was enabled to understand these conundrums, for my visitor proved to be a collector of curios and objects of natural history, and he had been seen tasting the bark of a creeper, presumably thinking it was cinchona, by a "boy" who had followed him.

Neither he nor the troopers understood one another, and when he informed them that he was a taxidermist they concluded that this was his name, but could only remember the

first portion of the word. He shortly appeared with his hands full of ferns and other green stuff from the scrubs. He was dressed in spotless white, and wore a straw hat set jauntily on his head, topped with a veil which encircled the brim, and patent leather boots. He would have shone in Queen Street, Brisbane, but it was hardly the rig for perambulating the scrubs in. He spoke English very well, and in fact larded it freely with "My word," "My colonial," and such innocent oaths, which are peculiar to Australia. He laughed at my remarking that "Taxy" was a strange name, but said it would do as well as any other as he was travelling on a secret service mission for a French museum, which he would tell me more about another day. He proved a pleasant and most amusing guest in the description of some of his experiences since he had set foot in Australia. He also sang, with good effect and gesture, some very lively songs of a French music hall nature before turning into his bunk for the night. The last thing he said before going to sleep was, "I shall take a bogie in the creek to-morrow." And when the morning came to my surprise he did; and, furthermore, suggested after breakfast

that he would like to accompany us during our next patrol so that he could collect his specimens under the shelter of the "boys."

So he came with us during our next rounds, attired in a more suitable costume, and mounted on a very quiet horse, as he said that he was not much accustomed to bush riding.

We had been out some few days, Taxy evidently enjoying himself very much, as evidenced by his highly spiced French ditties, which were often repeated far into the night; and as he shared my tent I begged him to crowd them all into the day's march and leave the night for sleeping. He owned that there was reason in the request, and intimated that he should give his horse many songs when on the road, as he had found that it appreciated music, and walked much faster when he sang. But one day, on approaching a station, our gay friend suddenly stopped in the middle of one of his favourite verses, pulled up his horse, and looked grave. Upon my remarking that we had good quarters before us and abundance of fruit, he said, "That may be; I have been to this place before, and they were not very civil to me: with your permission I will remain here till you have finished your business." I

made no further remark, but had the tent pitched for him, and saw that he was supplied with rations, as I intended to camp with the "boys" in the quarters of the old squatter who owned the station.

It was late in the evening whilst smoking on the verandah with the owner of the place that I remembered my botanical acquaintance, and mentioned the fact of his having camped about a mile from the house.

"What is your foreign friend like?" asked my host.

I described him as he appeared to me.

"A very spruce, well-dressed young man—clean shaven, barring a beautiful moustache, dark eyes, might have stepped out of a Parisian bandbox."

The old squatter on hearing this broke into a laugh.

"Why, that's the botany skin hunter," he said. "I wonder that one of your 'boys' isn't missing by this. He camped here one day, and with many polite bows told me he had heard that we had some excellent stockwhips made of *nègre* hide which he would like to buy for his museum. On my telling him that he had been misinformed he said, 'Oh no, pardon

me, some real squatter gentlemen who were travelling first class on a steamer told me that all squatters as soon as they had built a house ran in a few *nègres* for their skins, and that you had a specially good assortment.' 'Anything else?' I remarked. But he did not take this question in the tone I meant it, for dropping his voice to a whisper and gazing at me with a most pathetic expression in his dark eyes, he continued, 'Yes, shoot me a black-fellow and I will give you twenty sovereigns for the head and entire skin. My word! This trophy will make my name famous all over my beautiful France.' I can see him now, blinking his eyes with delighted anticipation. What did I say? Why, nothing for the moment, for after this appalling request I had to think of the best means of getting rid of him. He wasn't armed, else I should have feared for one of my station blacks. So muttering something about absenting myself to clean my rifle, and at the same time telling him of an adjacent scrub which was full of ferns and orchids, and bidding him seek them, I went away and thought out a plan to get rid of this over-zealous young collector.

" Finding he had taken his departure to hunt

for weeds in the scrub I looked up my man Jimmy, and after a certain conversation with him bid him take the Frenchman's swag and manavilins, and seek the owner, who was fossicking amongst the trees and ferns. In about a couple of hours my man came back and described his meeting with the blood-thirstily inclined collector in somewhat the following fashion :

“ ‘ I advanched upon him in the shcrub, an’ he was pickin’ roots up a tray. “ Whisht ! ” says I, “ whishper, he’s clanin’ an’ loadin’ his gun. Come wid me quick, I’ll carry yer shwag and show yer the way ; he can’t foller ye.” Then the gintleman up the tray he say, “ Craynordetechien.” “ Who’s that ? ” says I. “ Never mind, yer fool,” says he, “ you must learn the beautiful French ; go away, I find a perfect white specimen of a cat and layer up here, and I shall preserve it.” “ That’s jist what the mashter says,—says he— ‘ The Frenchman is a beautiful white specimen, and whin I’ve preserved his shkin it will make many fine shtock-whips,’ and whin he was loading in the bullets he says, ‘ Jimmy, would I lose the chance of such a lovely specimen thrown in my way ? ’ ‘ Niver,’ says

I. 'An' you shall shkin him,' says he. 'You'll do it to-night.' With that I sharpens me knife, but then I thinks I'll give the por buy a chance, p'r'aps he's got a mother, so I gets yer things and comes off hot foot ; an' I must tell yer he always shoots in the head."

" 'Well, the gentleman drops down the tree looking very white. "Nordedew," says he, "is this true?" and I answers in his own language, "It is true nordedew."

" 'With that he drops his weeds, and I pretending to hear some one coming, he bolts off like a bandicoot, an' meself after him. He ran, and I ran, an' I put him on the road for the ten mile scrub wid his luggage. An' thin I shouts after him, "What's yer name?" "Ameal," says he, pulling up. "Well, you'll find a meal and plenty more in yer swag, don't eat now, but run," says I ; an' he did, an' I came home.'

"There's no doubt," concluded the old squatter, "that this poor Frenchman believed all that was told him by those infernal chaps on the boat, and was acting in a *bond fide* way ; but I was glad to get rid of him, I can tell you, and that's the way Jimmy managed it. So he's turned up with you?"

"Yes," I said, "and we had better go and see what he's up to." When we arrived at the tent we found it empty, and one of the 'boys,' on peering in, said that the Frenchman had not slept there; then he began to cast about, and presently returned to say that he found the trail on the bush track near by, following the tracks of a jin, and that both Frenchman and jin had passed some hours ago."

"Here's a pretty how-d'y-do," cried the old squatter in his wrath when he heard this. "Monsieur's still leather hunting! He's the dead finish! You'd better round him up; I'm off home."

Now Taxy had informed me more than once during our recent acquaintance that one object which he had in his mind in coming to the Colony was the hope that he might effect a union with an aboriginal, for that there would then be a double advantage. She would not only with her sharp eyes assist him in collecting, but she must also accompany him to France. "But first and foremost," he exclaimed, with many fervent gesticulations, "she must be beautiful and of the pure blood, she must also have the splendid figure; thus on arriving in

my country I shall introduce her at every exhibition as a daughter of the wild cannibals of Australia.

“So shall I make a noble pile of francs, and, *qui sait?* at length the rigour of the climate may not at last suit her—then will the museum make an enormous offer for her. After all, is it not glory to die for *la belle France*!!!”

At the time I dismissed the matter as frivolous talk, but now the whole story occurred to me, and when we saw that the amorous Frenchman had left all his plants and other things behind him, thus proving that he was in earnest, it struck us that we had better catch him up before he was knocked on the head.

Now the Australian jin has a very pretty little foot, the tiny impression on the dusty track had caught the eye of the excitable Frenchman, and it was obvious by certain marks that he had literally run after her. Our object was to follow quickly before he got into trouble with the woman's tribe—a friendly mob known to be in the neighbourhood—who, however, like all blacks, object to their women being interfered with.

For some miles the dusky beauty of Taxy's wild imagination had kept the main track, her would-be lover closely following the easily read signs. She had then suddenly turned off at a tangent towards a neighbouring range of low lying hills, whilst Taxy had still kept to the bush road, for being no bushman he had taken it for granted that she had gone straight ahead. So at this point we pulled up, the "boys" explaining that the jin had evidently gone to her camp, a tiny column of smoke indicating this in the distance, and that they could recognise her at any time, as one of her toes was missing from the left foot. Not specially wishing to make her acquaintance, we followed her ardent pursuer, and a long hunt it was. We soon found that he too had left the road and followed a cattle track, which we eventually ran to a very small station, and found this was occupied by a humorous Irishman, who informed us that many hours before a wild and hot-looking foreigner had rushed in and asked if he was harbouring a beautiful black woman with lovely feet. But Pat told us that he did not like the looks of the man at all, for that he had inspired terror in his house-keeper, and caused a new chum, or Jackeroo,

whom he was instructing in station life, to arm himself. So he gave Taxy a drink, and sent him off on a false trail. We found our friend at length lying exhausted under a large Ti-tree, near to which was a dried-up water-hole. His clothes were torn, his boots burst open, and his unshaved and wild appearance gave us the impression that we had found a foreign "sundowner" of the most evil type, instead of the neat Parisian with whom we were acquainted; yet he had lost nothing of his pleasant manners, for on perceiving us he struggled gamely to his feet, with a profound bow took off his battered old hat, as only a Frenchman can, and first apologising in the most gallant manner for having given us so much trouble, he next threw up his hands with a gesture of despair, crying, "I have lost the *petite* one of the beautiful foot, and think an Irishman I saw has stolen her from me. *Hélas!* —but I am French! and I find her or die!!!"

First refreshing the wearied aspirant with a good nobbler of 30 O.P. Queensland rum, and giving him something to eat, we informed him that we knew where the girl was; upon which he started up, begging us to take him to her side at once.

This was unadvisable, but as he insisted that he would continue the search even if he had to go alone, we compromised matters by promising to bring the unknown one to him. With much joy he thereupon climbed on to a spare horse, and we proceeded, and having arrived within sight of the camp fire already referred to, I despatched a "boy" to interview the jin and bring her to us on the track, under the promise that she should not be detained, but be sent at once back to her friends with a small present for herself and them. Meanwhile, we turned out the horses and made tea. Taxy could hardly contain himself during the hours we waited. Having borrowed a clean shirt, and generally cleaned and brushed himself up—with the aid of a pocket mirror, which every trooper seemed to carry—he spent the rest of the time in nervously walking up and down, stopping ever and anon to gaze into his looking-glass and see whether his moustache assumed the correct savage twist, and all this with the air of one who has an important assignation with an unknown beauty.

Presently the mounted man was made out in the far distance, and bringing binoculars to bear, I discovered what appeared to be a

bundle of rags seated behind the horseman. When the "boy" gained our camp, he gave this bundle a violent shove, which sent it spinning and rolling off the horse on to the ground. Whilst we were still wondering what next was going to happen, a figure suddenly sprang out of an old 'possum cloak and shrieked yells and curses at the "boy" who had thus unceremoniously dismounted it. All the "boys" were in fits of laughter, but one of them picked up her pipe, and filling it with tobacco somewhat appeased her injured feelings. As she had cast off her only garment we now saw that she was a hideous and skinny old jin. Being told by a trooper to approach Taxy, she now advanced upon him, whereupon he retreated behind a horse, holding out his hands to keep her off. However, she was quicker than he was, and rushing up she seized him with one hand, whilst with the other she drew another clay pipe out of her grey locks, where it was hidden, and with much whining and waving of her skinny arm informed him that he was to give her "plenty baccy."

The Frenchman was furious, and with much gesture commenced to upbraid the crowd generally in a mixture of English and French.

"Why make me dis dam joke?" he cried, "but ah, perhaps dis is de grandmère, if so, bring me de granddaughter." In vain we told him that this was the identical jin he had been tracking; nothing would convince him until we drew his attention to her left foot with the missing toe, then proceeding on the track we made her place her foot in the old spoor. Not until he had seen several of these prints was he convinced that he had made a fool of himself, then he told the old scarecrow to be off; however, she absolutely declined to move until he had collected plug tobacco for her. Having secured this, she gathered up her cloak, lit her pipe, and then turned round with "give mine tixpence."

Taxy threw her some "tokens," which did duty for pennies in those days, with a savage grunt of dismissal, and the old hag hobbled off, only turning round when she had gained a little distance to give a parting bit of her mind to the "boys," who responded with what was evidently an outburst of malicious chaff, judging by the way it was received from the departing child of nature, who by way of answer made hideous grimaces accompanied by yells and movements expressive of derisive contempt.

So we rode back to head quarters, with Taxy bringing up the rear—no longer the gay songster, but wearing a dejected and sorrowful mien which, indeed, seemed imparted to the animal he bestrode. However, by the time that the next coasting boat called in he had fully regained his lost spirits, and vowed that he would seek a quite unexplored part of the country, whilst for the future he intimated that he should believe half what he heard and but little that he saw.

I was sorry to lose the company of this gay Frenchman, for he was distinctly "good company," specially during the long evenings, with his varied songs and boulevard anecdotes; but at the same time felt a sense of relief when he was gone, as his researches, whether in an amatory or "collecting" form, partook of such a bold and aspiring nature that he must eventually have got both himself and others into great trouble.

CHAPTER XIX

THE JACKEROO

Thirsty Pat—"Man Bushed"—The Search—Short of Water—
Tracking Rewarded—"Blank's" Sandy Bed—Himself Again
—Pat's would-be Treatment

SOME weeks after my French acquaintance had taken his departure, I was reminded of him again by a fresh visitor. I had been out with one of the jins to try and track a lost sheep, for very precious were our muttons to us, when a trooper galloped up to say that "a white fellow with cabon yabber," whom I had met before, wanted to see me at once. So I got quickly home, and then recognised in the new comer the same Irishman who, as Taxy vowed, had spirited away the dark beauty he was seeking. However, he was in no mood for referring to our previous meeting. I found him violently hacking up a piece of plug tobacco; an example likewise followed by myself, as little

can be done in the bush without a smoke first to clear the brains.

But my new acquaintance was not long in coming to the point, for after a few mighty draws of his "Barret's twist" he said:

"I want yer to lend me a couple of yer 'buys' for——"

"Impossible," I broke in.

"Whait a while, hark, me buy, till ye hear me spake," he interrupted, with much energy, "it's a long and thusty road I've come." This hint produced a bottle of "three star," and when the old squatter had comforted himself he got up and rolled out such a history, embellished as it was with such a pile of expletives, that I grew interested.

"As I was saying," he commenced—he had not said it at all, "the blatherin' idiot's gone and last himself, and him only jist out from his sainted mother from Country Cark, and she paying me—well—a fair sum for his kape and larnin' me trade, which is bullock punchin'." A lot more he gave me to the same effect, and then—probably judging by my silence that I did not intend to bestir myself—concluded with greater volubility than ever, and with much pantomime:

"Be arl the saints in glary the man's murder will be on yer sowl, and I shall lose me bit of pay if yer don't find the blankety Jackeroo alive an' kickin'."

Now I had had to think a bit, because, determined as I was that the lost man should be found if possible, my strict and written orders were that I should on no account ever absent myself from the "boys." Even my Irish friend allowed that I could not be in two places at once; but I eased his mind by telling him that any consequences should be risked, and he should have the help he needed, only that he must put the affair shortly in writing, and sign his name to it. I wish I could have kept the document he afterwards handed to me. It was supreme: but though I have official papers connected with my time in the N.M.P., that special gem I have lost.

So I took a couple of "boys" and left the others in charge of the barracks, with strict orders as to their conduct, and a promise of gaudy Crimean shirts if all went well during my absence.

This was the first occasion in which I had been personally engaged in the quest for a

lost man, though, like most dwellers in Australia, I had heard many thrilling stories of such events—detailed to me over the camp fire—and felt glad that the native police had a chance of distinguishing themselves ; for in certain previous cases of a similar nature the lost one had been searched for by incompetent white or black men, for it is not every aboriginal who can track—those who have been “wood and water Joey” on a station and know well the taste of strong drinks lose much of their fine bush senses.

I had with me two of the steadiest “boys,” and the best trackers of our small force. This fact practically freed me of all responsibility, no commands nor directions were required. They might go as they pleased and be left entirely to their own marvellous judgment of signs ; or their instinct, rather, as was the case here, than to their knowledge of the country.

It proved a long ride and a thirsty one, as our friend had once before remarked ; but he was cheery, and in high spirits, and with his quaint remarks caused much merriment on the road. Not a drink did we get until we arrived—at the station I was going to say.

In reality the squatter's abode consisted of a moderate-sized bark humpy, with a tiny shed near by which did duty as a kitchen. As we approached he stood up in his stirrups, and, pointing to his shed with a deprecating wave of the hand, said, it was only "preliminary, some day we should see an iriction——"; but a suggestion of water cut short his rhapsodies, and jumping off his horse and shouting cheerily, "Wid a drap in it and wilcome," he passed us in on to the earthen floor of his domain.

Darkness was now setting in, and the "boys" suggested they should camp outside, and that we should take up the trail at daylight.

Our host did his "big best" and made every one comfortable, enlivening the time by abusing his red-haired Irish "slavey"—the only occupant of the place as far as I could see—for not having all sorts of luxuries and drinks ready. However, if the said delicacies had been present we did not want them, for of good beef and bread there was plenty, and a bottle of rum. I very soon turned into a comfortable bunk of sacking, and was being pleasantly lulled to sleep by a gentle corroborree, which proceeded from the "boys" at their camp fire; then the squatter broke

out into a cheery song, which he rendered with much power and feeling. I only remember the following lines in it :

“ An’ he built him an iligant pigstye
That made all the Munster buys stare,
An’ he builded likewise many castles,
But alas ! they were all in the air.”

These lines were most typical of the singer, and though I heard the song again some years afterwards I have never been able to get the whole of the words, to my regret.

By daylight next day the “boys” had brought up the horse of the missing man, and having taken a good look at his shoes turned him loose again. The old squatter said that he would stay about the place whilst we were away, for that he had much valuable property to see after, also that he would beguile the extra time with song and reading, and the making of stockwhips, at which latter work he was certainly an adept, as I had ample evidence to prove. Upon my gently hinting that he might have been connected with leather work at home, he answered as he cocked his chest, “I was mashter of *arl* trades in the ould country.” When we were all ready for a start he held up his hands and

his brows contracted. "Whait a while, me bhuoys, I must pack ye saft bread and whine, and butter, and milk, and brandy, and shticking plaster and painkiller for the pore defunct."

I verily believe that the good-hearted Irishman really thought that he was in the position of an universal provider; but I remember that he was evidently relieved when I only asked for a small flask of spirits and a large bottle of milk. Then we rode away, after having the direction pointed out, at which the riderless horse was found grazing. This spot proved to be some five miles distant, and the "boys" upon reaching it picked up the back tracks of the animal. Holding to this, though other shod horses had crossed the trail, we found that it had come at a gallop from a belt of forest which was visible on the far side of a great plain. The "boys" galloped along the tracks, steadied down after entering the gum-trees, and then proceeded cautiously, having to make a small cast now and then, so faint were the signs, even to them, on the hard ground under the timber. Not a word was uttered by them whilst puzzling out the hoof marks, but I was conscious of a subdued excitement as I watched their action.

At length, after many tortuous windings, during which the homeward bound horse had walked, we came to where he had galloped out of a clearing in the forest. This had been caused, in days gone by, by a cyclone or whirlwind wrecking some of the great trees. At this spot the two troopers pointed out something to each other, and then got off their horses. I did likewise, feeling that some special discovery had been made. One "boy" held the three horses; the other walked on and pointed out to me, evidently considering that I ought to understand his hieroglyphics, that here the white man was thrown, there he had picked himself up and run after the horse, when failing to catch it he had sat down on that log and smoked; and sure enough what I did see was a half-burnt wax match at the spot indicated. As we looked back from this point I noticed that the forest was very dark and thick, and it was doubtless owing to this fact that the dismounted rider had not been able to see which way the horse had taken; for after a few irresolute turnings he had proceeded in quite a contrary direction. This, it may be mentioned, was the first fatal step which led to his undoing. And

now the "boys" followed his tracks on foot, leading their horses. This course was inevitable, but seemed to me terribly slow work, considering that every moment was precious.

On for many weary miles we went, till at length the trackers said we should not get him that night, but that as he was walking strong he would most likely pull through if he found water—so far we had seen no signs of this. Seeing that the trail bore rather to the right of our position, I ventured to ask whether it would not lead eventually to the running stream, which I have mentioned.

"Bel," they answered with a pitying smile, as they pointed out a line of mountains in quite another part of the country, which they averred dominated that sparkling brook; and then, as if interpreting my own thoughts, informed me that we must find water for ourselves and horses before long, preparatory to forming a camp for the night. One of them then ascended a tall tree to its very top, and, having apparently thus taken in the lie of the country, descended, and with his tomahawk blazed the trunk all round; then quitting the trail he mounted his horse and rode off at a tangent, merely remarking as he pointed with his chin,

"I believe water sit down there." We had been suffering from thirst for some time now, and, like most men under similar conditions, glad thoughts arose in my mind of bubbling springs and cool water affording unlimited "drinks" of the life-giving liquid.

Alas for the reality!

We came at last to a deep defile in the forest, and having with some trouble ridden the horses down its steep banks, the dry bed of a small creek presented itself. We followed this down in single file, when the leading "boy," uttering an exclamation of disgust, threw himself from his horse, which I then saw was making frantic efforts to rush into a sort of scoop-out in the ravine. The others tried to follow suit, and we had difficulty in restraining the poor beasts who had smelt water. And what a miserable puddle it was! The quick eye of the "boy" had seen that any one of our steeds would have drunk most of it up and rendered the residue undrinkable by stirring up the mud. So he saved the situation by his warning. It took two of us all our time to hold the animals, whilst the third man carefully dipped out about a gallon of the precious liquid with a pint pot, pouring it into

our largest billy. In spite of its being warm and spiced with gum leaf juice, the drink all round proved most refreshing, and we were able to smoke again. After filling the can again for a big brew of tea, we waited sufficiently long for the small hole to fill up once more, and at last partially watered the horses by means of an indiarubber basin we had with us. They were then hobbled out, and as the dew fell copiously that night, and there was a fair amount of herbage, they proved pretty fit by the next morning.

There was a little more than a pint of muddy water left in the hole when we looked into it at sunrise the next day, so the source had evidently stopped running. Now I wondered, as we prepared to mount after our night's rest, whether the trackers would make a cast, and so hit off the trail, or return to the blazed tree. They chose the latter course, doubtless for some good reason known to themselves, and picked up the footsteps at once. Shortly after we had made this fresh start the course of the wanderer proved most erratic, circling around the belts of timber to the right, again to the left, without either aim or object. It was

evident that the man we were "hunting" had no compass with him, further, that he was becoming wildly bewildered. We followed the erratic footmarks thus for some two hours, when they suddenly took a straight course, and looking ahead the troopers pointed out a fringe of dark-leaved trees, which as I knew of old denoted the channel of a water-course, and this it proved to be, but utterly dried up. Into this the feet of the exhausted man had taken him. Into this his hands had scraped deeply in the sand, but to no purpose, and we knew now that he had not met with water during the whole of his lonely wanderings.

But he was not far off, as the "boys" knew. One of them galloped his tracks down the sandy bed and disappeared round a bend of the channel, presently returning with : "That fellow sit down there, that fellow bong." To my surprise my companions then made excuses for not proceeding : one fancied something the matter with his girths ; the other said he must shift his saddle as his horse had a sore back ; so I spurred up my animal and soon viewed the man we were in search of, stretched out on the sand under

a shady bank of the channel. But he was not dead or anything like it, though he presented a pitiable sight. He lay quite still, and had placed a handkerchief and some leaves over his face. These I removed, and found his eyes wide open, and his tongue swollen and protruding. He blinked his eyes as I uncovered them, but did not attempt to move. Now the milk, which we had brought in a bottle, had gone for the greater part into little balls of butter, so propping him up I administered one of these with a drop of rum, saw it melt in his mouth and go down—thus he could swallow. I then galloped back to the troopers for assistance. They looked a bit ashamed of themselves when I told them that the man who was pronounced "Bong," or dead, was "Budgery," or all right, and then I smartly rated the "boy" who had brought back this false news. They will examine with interest the corpse of a black man, like themselves; but it seems to be different when the body is that of a white, and enveloped in a bundle of clothes.

They informed me that there was water down the creek, as they had heard white

cockatoos, so I sent one to find it, and brought the other back with me.

I will give the strange man's name as "Blank," and a pretty appropriate one too, considering the state we found him in. Well, Blank's eyes followed every movement we made when I was once more at his side. Then he pointed towards his feet, by a motion of his eyes. We uncovered his limbs, which were buried in the sand, and found that he had neither boots nor socks on, yet his tracks denoted that he was booted up to the place we found him in. We reasoned that it would be best to form a camp, and feed him up with slops for the present. Presently the other trooper returned with a "billy" full of good water, which he had found in a rocky hole. He then took the horses back with him to give them a good drink, previous to their being turned out. "Blank" took another ball, and by night time was evidently improving. Drinks of milky water eased his tongue, but he could not yet speak; though he tried to, he only succeeded in emitting ghastly noises from his throat. These, accompanied with nightmare and a sort of "horrors," continued for some

hours, but towards dawn he sank into a kind of slumber. We propped up shady boughs round him and let him be.

When he awoke we stripped him and soused him with water ; this proved a real relief to the stricken man, and one " boy " was kept going as galloper to the water-hole and back.

Bread soaked in milk and butter he was at length able to swallow. He had neither matches, watch, knife, nor anything useful about him. We learnt from him later that he had left all his matches at one of his resting-places, and could not find them again. He had intended to fire the bush as a signal, and this loss had driven him frantic for the time being.

I asked the " boys " which was the shortest way to the squatter's hut, when, without an instant's hesitation, they pointed in a direction totally different from that which we had come by.

" Blank " now got better hour by hour, and the " boys " having found his boots buried in the sand under his head, we put these on his feet, as the ground was hot, and got him on his legs and walked him a few steps to

relax his muscles, and upon ascertaining that he wished to try and undertake the journey home, he was supported on a led horse, and we started in the cool of the evening, having carefully filled all our water-bottles. Traveling all night, with a rest in the middle of it, we reached the hut at so early an hour in the morning that no one was about, so we made our man comfortable and turned in ourselves. I heard the old squatter's voice though before I got to sleep, he had evidently come upon "Blank," and was speaking in no gentle whisper to himself: "Be arl the goats of Kerry the prodical son's turned up alive, the shape's come back to the fold, glary be to Gad, and nothing out a pocket, not aven for the findin' him. How the buy's changed though, his blissed mother wouldn't know him! I must doctor him a bit."

At this point I heard the clinking of glasses and roared out to him to "leave the chap alone." Upon hearing this the old boy stepped up with his bottle to my bunk, and with a solemn face assured me that he intended to let the "buy slape," but that we must drink to his speedy recovery. I had to pretend to be more tired than I really was before I

could induce the lively old man to go away and look after his cattle.

After a good day's rest "Blank" related to us the story of his wanderings, but there was little more to learn than what the troopers had read from the signs. He remembered but little of his last day's sufferings, and in many small matters his mind was a blank. He had sucked the dewy herbage every night, but this act merely tantalised his palate. He declared that he saw blackfellows one evening ; but this was certainly a phantom of the brain, for the "boys" had specially looked out for signs of natives, without result.

It appears that he fell into a state of coma, or indifference to everything, before we found him, but had the sense to stagger into the shade and cover his face and feet from the sun and mosquitoes before lying down, to die, as he expected.

He thanked us all for "seeing him through," and declared in a joky way that he should now apply for a post in the N.M.P., as he had had a bit of powerful experience.

So we bid him and his eccentric guardian good-bye ; but the latter was bound to have the last word, for as we rode away he cried

out, "You said the buy wanted a cheerful companion to complate his cure—and faix he's got that same in me." So he concluded as he drew himself up stiffly to answer our salute.



Edward also got on so
well with his relatives.

(From a drawing by the late Sir Frank Lockwood.)

[To face p 266.

TO VNU AIRPORT



Interesting Results of Lixivization amongst the Negroes.

(From a pen-and-ink drawing by the late Sir Frank Lockwood.)

[To face p. 266.]

70 MINT ALBAFALLA

CHAPTER XX

SOME OLD FRIENDS

End of N.M.P. Experiences—Some Old Colonial Friends—Up-to-Date Accounts of Tobacco and Coffee Cultivation from *British Australasian* of May 1901—References to De Satge's Book, W. A. Horn's, and Jack Barry's

AND now I have finished this narrative concerning a portion of my experience in the N.M.P. In conclusion I would like to borrow from the latest sources some hints which may be useful to intending emigrants.

I have lately received a copy of the *British Australasian and New Zealand Mail*, of May 9th, 1901, sent to me by an old chum, Edmund Rawson, who, with his equally popular brother Charley, was amongst the earliest pioneers of the "Pioneer River," Mackay. Also J. E. Davidson, John Spiller, and others of my old friends, all real "white men," are mentioned in this paper, recalling

to my mind the happy times of days long past—the halcyon days of the Southern “River Mob.”

There is, besides, an excellent likeness in the *B.A.* of C. S. Dicken, C.M.G., who has long and faithfully served the Queensland Government as secretary in Victoria Street, and with whom I had the pleasure of sailing on my first voyage to the antipodes.

There are a couple of short articles in this paper which especially appeal to the planter, and which I will now quote in case they may have escaped the eyes of those young men who are contemplating emigration to Queensland, with a view to taking up that healthiest of all occupations—the cultivation of the soil. The first article is headed

TOBACCO.

“Of late years tobacco has become a well-established industry in Queensland. The most suitable land for the successful production of the tobacco leaf is that in the Texas and Inglewood districts, where the bulk of the tobacco growers are now located; and an expert in Melbourne has stated that judging

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



GUNYAHS, DILLY BAGS, AND YAMS (PRESENT DAY).

[To face p. 268.]

from the class and quality of some Texas leaf which had come under his observation, he considered that the district would become the future Virginia of Australia. When the uniform tariff of the Commonwealth comes into force, the Queensland tobacco crop will be a much more important industry than it has been possible for it to be hitherto. The Government has appointed a tobacco expert, whose duty it is to give growers the benefit of his advice, and any other assistance in his power.

“The crop marketed for the year ending 1899 yielded about seven hundred and sixty-five thousand pounds of tobacco, and found ready sale at about sixpence per pound; which amounted to £19,125, or about £24 per acre. Under the present system of cultivation—which is an expensive one, and does not embrace the latest ideas on the subject—the cost to the farmer of a pound of tobacco ready for sale is about threepence, so that even at that price the profits considerably exceed the profits per acre reaped by the grain farmer.”

The next article deals with

COFFEE.

Like tobacco, the growing of coffee in Queensland is likely to become an important industry, and, as the *British Australasian* stated in a recent issue, "Young men thinking of migrating to Australia, to seek their fortunes in the Commonwealth, would do well at present to turn their attention to coffee growing in Northern Queensland. There are now about two hundred coffee growers in the State, and land, in every way suitable, may be secured at almost nominal prices. When the uniform tariff comes into existence, and all the markets of Australia are open to the Queensland planter, the business should be increasingly profitable.

"It is one of the pleasantest of open-air occupations, but requires a moderate capital to carry on with until the plants come into bearing. Much useful information respecting coffee planting in Queensland is to be found in a report by the Government Instructor in Coffee Culture, which may be obtained at the Agent-General's offices in London."

To conclude with a reference to squatting,



COFFEE PLANTATION, BLACKALL RANGE, QUEENSLAND.

Plants in second stage ready to be planted in permanent places.

[To face p. 270]

NOV 19 1964
U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I would advise those who think of entering upon pastoral pursuits to procure the work, quite lately published and written by that grand old pastoral pioneer, Oscar de Satgé. The book is entitled: *Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter*.

Think of a book written up to date by one who went out to the Colonies nearly fifty years ago. Note the sound advice offered in chapter xxx. to those who would follow in the author's footsteps. The book teems also with anecdotes characteristic of the free and open-air life of the pastoral squatter, and is likewise beautifully illustrated.

Another book of a very different nature shows what "a rolling stone," a stone, however, of adamant rock, can and can not do in the Colonies. The author, a man of almost fiendish pluck and determination, tells his own story truthfully and simply. The title of the book I cannot exactly call to mind, but it represents the pros and cons extending over many years of colonial life. It is written by Jack Barry, and published by Sampson Low.

Another recent work is W. A. Horn's *Explorations in Central Australia*. These

splendid volumes, besides being descriptive of everything relating to the country, go fully into many of the rites and ceremonies of the natives ; amongst others the extraordinary rite of sub-incision is described, together with photographs illustrating the ceremony. I hear that this rite is also described, with regard to another country, in *Religious Ceremonies of the World*.

And now I bring to an end these old-time events. Some experiences which befell me, specially one of a sad and pathetic nature, cannot be published ; and yet another, where the survivor of an old-time fearful massacre by the blacks had stayed in my hut—a morose man, yet interesting withal. Old Queenslanders will recognise the allusion when I state that a terrible vengeance was inflicted on the black fiends, and almost entirely by one man.

I often dwell on this early period of my life, as on a pleasant, realistic dream, and wonder how, and where, the old force is still composed, and whether it is still required in the sense it used to be. The old memories connected with nature unspoilt, the simple lessons in natural history, the complete in-

dependence, the care taken of one by faithful "boys" ready to do one's bidding ; all this, and more, inclines me to say with Adam Lindsay Gordon, " I'd live the same life over if I had to live again."

INDEX

ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETY, 29
 Africa, South, scouting in, 156,
 171
 Agra Bank, failure of the, 5
 Agricultural Act, 7
 Alligators, 190
 Ann's, St., station, 64
 Australian Steamship Naviga-
 tion Company, 39; skippers,
 40
 B——, MR., his power of track-
 ing and scouting, 211; bobbery
 pack, 212; feats of horseman-
 ship, 215, 217; rides a bullock,
 218-22
 Ball, preparations for, 87; the
 M.C., 88; "Manchester Gal-
 lop," 89; evening dress, 90
 Bandicoot, 141
 "Bange," or sleep, 184, 226
 Bank of Queensland, suspen-
 sion, 5
 "Barcoo rot," 132
 "Barramundi," 186
 Barry, Jack, his book on Colonial
 life, 271

Bell, 64
 "Billy" the scout, 171-73
 Birds: black duck, 198; pigeons,
 199; wonga wonga, 199;
 whampoa, 199; Torres Straits
 pigeon, 200
 "Black Police of Queensland,"
 2, 20. *See* Police
 Blackall, Governor, 29
 Blacks, a mob of, 71. *See*
 Natives
Blacks and Bushrangers, ex-
 tract from, 124 *note*
 Blake, the Invincible, 147; track-
 ing blacks, 148-56, 159-61;
 return to Salvia Downs, 163;
 cattle raided, 163; his deed
 of "derring-do," 166; adven-
 ture with a bushranger, 168
Blanche, H.M.S., 33
 "Blank," lost in the Bush, 250;
 search for, 255; his wander-
 ings, 256, 259; discovery, 260;
 condition, 261-64
 Boggo Road, fruit farm at, 30
 "Bogie," or swim, 137
 "Bong," or dead, 261

- Boomerangs, 118
 Boree country, 147
 Bottle chorus, 84 ; tree, 72
 Bourner's Hotel, 62
 Bowen River, 70
 Bowen, Sir George, Governor of Queensland, 28
 Brandy, manufacture of, 30
 Breakfast Creek, 23
 Bream, black, 69
 Brennan, 119
 Brenner River, 13
 Brigalow scrubs, 70
 Brisbane, 3 ; bread riot, 5 ; first experiences, 11 ; Botanical Gardens, 29
Brisbane Courier, 30 ; "A Struggle for Life," 93-100
British Australasian, 267 ; letter on the experiences of a sugar pioneer, 8-10 *note*
 Buckjumpers, 77 ; system of training, 78-81
 "Budgery," meaning of, 261
 Bullock, riding a, 218-22
 Burdekin River, 102
 Burnett district, 42
 Bush shanty, 130
 "Bushed," 81

 CAIRNS, 99
 Camping out, 65
 Canoe, a quickly made, 102
 Cape York, 9
 Cardwell, 93
 Carew, 64
 Cattle, overlanding, 37
 Cattle station, visit to a, 13 ; work on, 184

 Chalmers, Rev. J., murdered, 15
 Champion, Captain, 40
 Chatfield, Captain, 40
 Chin Chin, 202 ; narrow escape from death, 232
 Cockle, the giant, 74, 77
 Coffee planting, 270
 Comet River, 135
 Corroboree, 166
 Cottier, Captain, 40
 Courtship, mode of, 120, 123
 Cradle, rocking the, 48 ; "tailings," 48
 Crocodiles, 190 ; nest, 191
 Cullinaringo, 146

 DAVIDSON, J. E., 267
 Deasy, 95
 Denison, Port, 59, 62, 74
 Dicken, C. S., 268
 Diggers, 49
 Dingo hunt, 214-17
 Dogs, a bobbery pack, 212
 Don River, 64, 73
 Doves, 199
 Duck, black, 182, 198 ; weight and flavour, 182
 Dugong, 191 ; mode of capturing, 192
 Dunwich, 32

 ELLIOTT, MOUNT, 103
 Emigrant, falls overboard, 224
 Emigrants, demand for, 3 ; class of, 4
 Emu, run down, 64
Explorers, The Last of the, 134
 Eyre, his march along the Australian Bight, 135

FIENDS, three black, 93-100

Fish, "palmer," 31, 185; fresh-water herring, 187; sharks, 187; grey mullet, 188; spear-
ing, 188; casting a net, 189; whiting, 189; flathead, 189; *Sieneea horrida*, 190; Jew, 190; king, 190; alligators or crocodiles, 190; dugong, 191

Fitzroy River, 191, 225

Flathead fish, 189

Fly fishing, 184

"Foot rotting," 37

GAFFING a bully, 60-62

George, St., Willie, 64

Gladstone, township of, 37

Gold mine, 46; drays, 47; rock-
ing the cradle, 48; washing
the "tailings," 48; "stacking
the dirt," 49; diggers, 49; a
dark shaft, 49; quartz reefs,
53; alluvial diggings, 53;
"shepherding" a claim, 54

Gordon, Adam Lindsay, Quota-
tion from, 273

Günther, Dr., 75, 186, 190

"Gunyahs," or huts, 35

Guyanda Creek, 174, 181

Gympie Creek diggings, 41; a
new "rush," 43; "Lady
Mary" reef, 53; "shepherd-
ing" a claim, 54; a "roll up,"
56; total yield, 58

HANSOM cab, drive in a, 22-24

Helena, St., convict island of, 32

Herbert, Sir Robert, 129

Herring, fresh-water, 187

Hill, Mr., curator of the Bris-
bane Botanical Gardens, 29

Hooker, Dr., 201

Horn, W. A., *Explorations in
Central Australia*, 271

INGLEWOOD, tobacco cultivation,
268

Ipswich, 13

Jew fish, 190

"Jim, Slim," 225; fight with the
Greaser, 228-31; his habit of
swearing, 231

Jins, the, 122; mode of court-
ship, 120, 124

Jordan, Mr., 3

KANAKA labour in Queens-
land, experiences of a Sugar
Pioneer, 8-10 *note*

Kennedy, E. B., letter on Kanaka
labour in Queensland, 8-10
note

King fish, 190

King Island, 32

"Kitty," the mare, 23

Lates calcarifer, 186

Leichhardt range, 70; tree, 109

"Life, A Struggle for," 93-100

MAGNETIC ISLAND, 104

Man bushed, 250; mode of track-
ing, 255-60; his wanderings'
256, 259; discovery, 260; con-
dition, 261-64

"Manavilins," 101

"Manchester Gallop," 89

- Marriage, ceremony of, 120, 124
 Marsupial mouse, 203
 Mary River, 41, 43
 Maryborough, gold diggings at, 39, 41
 Masterman's Bank, failure of, 5
 McDonnell, Mr., 33
 Moreton Bay, 25, 31
 Morrill, Jimmy, 82, 103; on cannibalism, 124 *note*
 Mouse, marsupial, 203
 Mullet, grey, 188
 Murray, Mr. G., 170
 Myalls, 105; mode of catching turtles, 194

 "NASHVILLE," 45, 51; sites for shops, 46; Saturday night, 52; professionals, 52
 Natives of Queensland, 16; mockery of religion, 16-19; character, 20; power of mimicry, 122, 180; keen sight, 139, 143; tracking and scouting, 156, 171; power of concealment, 161; spearing fish, 188
 Net, casting a, 189
 Nettle, stinging, 201
 "Nicky, Nicky," 147; his fate, 163
 Nogoa River, 136

 "OVERLANDER, THE," 66-68
 Overlanding cattle, 37

 "PABLO," 32
 "Palmer" fish, 185; origin of the name, 31

 Payne, Jack, 25
 Pig, wild, mode of hunting, 212
 Pigeons, 199; the Torres Straits, 200
 Pine-apples, use and value of, 30
 Poingdestre, 64
 Police, Native Mounted, 2, 20, 34; duties of the force, 21, 35, 128; officer speared, 36; qualifications for joining, 127; drilling, 128; patrolling, 128
 Porcupine, flavour of, 141
 Prison, cast into, 85; rescue from, 86
 Purcell, 97

 QUANDANG berries, 200
 Quartz reefs, 53-55
 Quayle, Captain, 40
 Queensland, 1; area, 3; population, 3; emigrants, 3-5; suspension of the Bank, 5; Agricultural Acts, 7; letter on Kanaka labour in, 8-10 *note*; Somerset Crown land sale, 8-11; natives, 16; mockery of religion, 16-19; character, 20; Native Mounted Police, 20, 34; hospitality, 28; industry of the small settlers, 29; rocky barriers, 155; tracking and scouting, 156, 171; wild fowl, 182, 198; fish, 185; animals, 202; tobacco cultivation, 268; coffee planting, 270
 "Queensland, North, Fly Fishing in," 186
Queenslander, 31

- Quin, Mick, 176
 Quin, Mrs., interview with, 175-80
- R—, MR., 59; gaffing a bully, 60-62
- Rabbits, introduction of, 204; raid on, 206-9
- Rawson, Charley, 267
 Rawson, Edmund, 267
- Reefs, quartz, 53-55
Religious Ceremonies of the World, 272
- "Rifle" bird of Paradise, 27
 "River mob," 85
- Rockhampton, 125, 129, 224, 232
- "SALISBURY PLAINS," cattle station, 77
- Salvia Downs, 147, 163
- Sandgate Road, 14
- "Sandy blight," 42
- Satgé, O., *Pages from the Journal of a Queensland Squatter*, 271
- Scott, *The Romance of Australian Explorers*, 135
- Scouting in South Africa, 156, 171
- Shanty, a bush, 130
- Shark fishing, 105; shooting, 187
- Shaw, 94, 97
- Sheaf, 64
- Sheep station, "foot rotting," 37
- Shepherd, speared, 114; burial, 116
- Siemcea horrida*, 190
- Snake, carpet, flavour of, 141
- Somerset Crown land sale, 9-11
- Spiller, John, 9 *note*, 267
- Spring Creek Barracks, 129-33
- Squeejee heifer, feat of riding the, 219-22
- Stinging-tree, 201
- Stockriders, 77
- Sub-aquatic telegraphy, 121
- Sugar Pioneer, experiences of a, 8-10 *note*
- Suttor River, 70
- TAXY, M., 234; his appearance, 235; songs, 236; skin collector, 237; amorous intentions, 241; pursuit of a Jin, 242-47
- Terry, 64
- Texas, tobacco cultivation, 268
- Thursday Island, 11
- "Tickets for Soup," 11
- "Timeringle," 129
- Tobacco cultivation, 268; yield, 269; sale, 269; cost, 269
- Townsville, 101, 112; site of, 104
- Tracking, 156, 171
- "Trashing" cane, 8 *note*
- "Tridacna Gigas," or giant cockle, 74, 77
- Troy, 94, 97
- Turtle hunting, 194
- VILLEBOIS, MR., 214
- WALLABY, 202
- "Wanny," the warrior, 164
- Water, "yabber" under, 121; a new sensation in the, 144; search for, 257
- West, Jack, 62
- Westall, 147; his murder, 148-50

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Whampoa, 199 | Wyatt, Mount, 70 |
| Whiting, 189 | |
| Wills's massacre, 146 | "YABBER" under water, 121 |
| Wonga wonga, 199 | "Yarraman," a wild, 103 |
| "Woomera" or throwing stick,
107 | Yelamans, or shields, 166 |
| | "Yungun," 191 |



FOURTEEN DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

**This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.**

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

~~26 Mar '56 TW~~

JUN 6 1956 L U

LD 21-100m-2,'55
(B189s22)476

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

YC 48349

M206944

DU 27-

K4

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

